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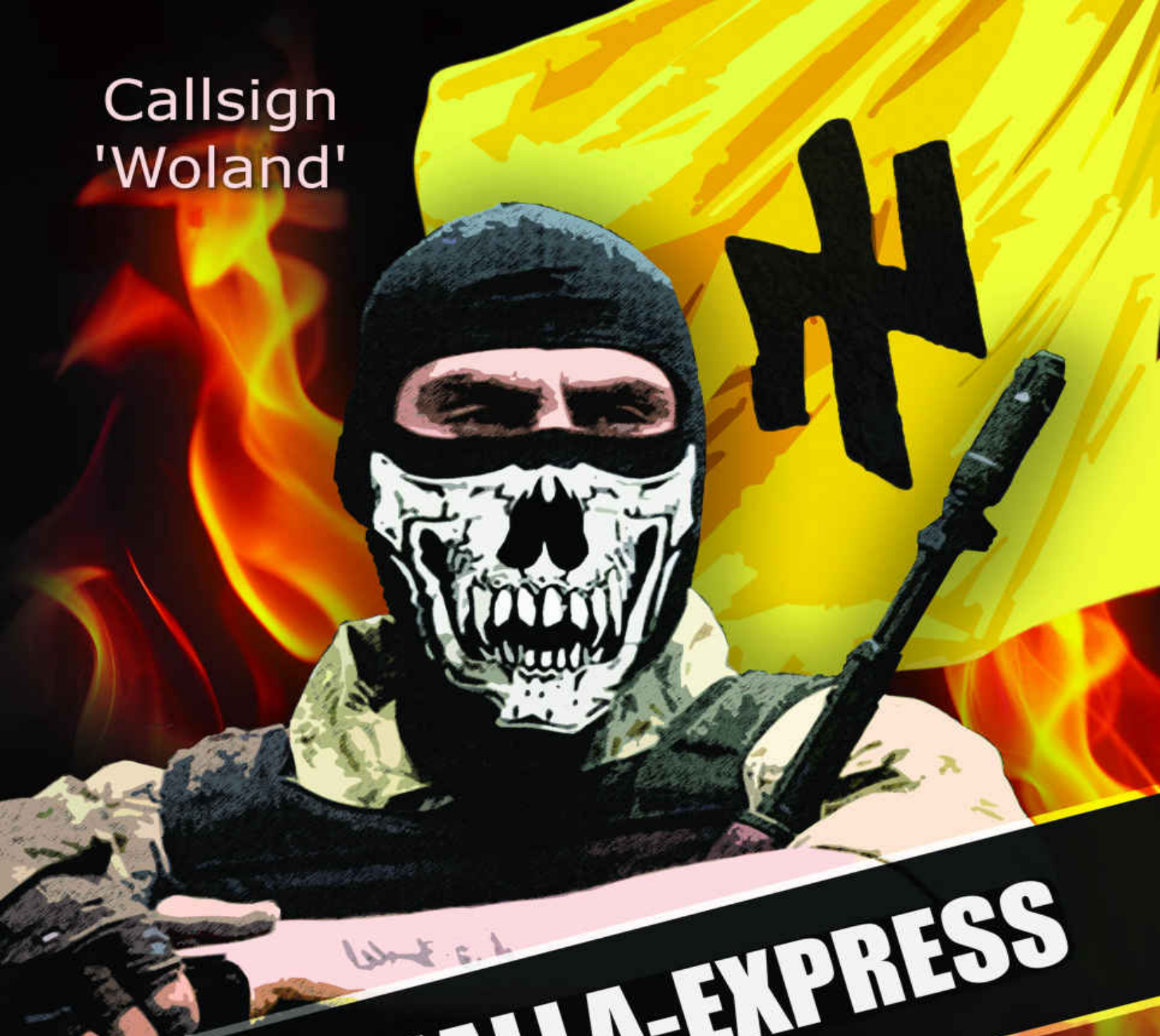

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There is the Last Judgement of the highest probe.
Where I'll be judged and crucified.
And all the rest are – fury and poison, Pride, vanity, and desperation.
Vis Vitalis, 1995

THE MAIDAN

UKRAINIAN ALTERNATIVE

PATRIOT OF UKRAINE

THE MEN FROM THE NORTHERN CAPITAL

REVOLUTION

RIGHT SECTOR “THE NORTH”

THE WAR

THE ASSAULT OF MARIUPOL

ILOVAIS’K

SHYROKYNE VILLAGE

ABOUT AUTHOR

THE MAIDAN

I often hear the phrase: "The Maidan[1] changed my life," "On the Maidan, I realized everything," etc. As a rule, people who considered us to be fascists before the Maidan, during it – provocateurs, and after – the Kremlin agents – used to say these phrases. Now there are many people who are seeking for the punishment for those who had shot the Heavenly Hundred Heroes[2] and many of those who care about murdered Berkuts and VV[3], there are many people who talk about a fight against corruption, but cursing Sashko Bily[4], those who are praising ATO[5] soldiers but travel to Crimea and vote for a new Party of Regions[6], there are many people who hope in the European Union, but hate changes in the country. Everywhere you can hear "Glory to Ukraine," but no one thinks about what it means. Every other man is now a "patriot"... This story began much earlier, at a time when for the slogan "Glory to Ukraine" people were taken to the police department or to start a street fight with so-called "grandeeswhofought"[7] right in the center of the city.

UKRAINIAN ALTERNATIVE

Children are always vexed
By their age and their everyday
And we fought to scratches,
To mortal resentments.

But our mothers

Patched our clothes in time
Whereas we swallowed books,
Getting drunk from the words.

Ballad of Strife

I do not know how it happened to me. I was not bad at school. I even was awarded a medal for an excellent study. Then I was accepted to a good university. Oh, yes, and my family was normal, no one beat me and did not infringe me, and everything was fine. Maybe not perfect, with the nuances, but it's like everywhere else so that there are no silly references to childhood. I had dreams about family, work, a car... I imagined myself to be an engineer, to work hard for the people good, to get a decent salary bring it home, and it is enough to provide for a family, and everything would be wonderful everywhere, nice people around, justice and living in great comfort, but... But in fact, life is a little different. At the university, I immediately faced with corruption, although at that time I did not recognize it. Not local? Do you want to live on a college campus? It is possible, but you need to give some money to the campus commandant. Otherwise, there will be no rooms for you. So I started to rent an apartment, there was nothing wrong with that, but it cost money, and some of the apartments were far from the place of my study. It wasn’t a problem. The study itself was fun, until the end of the term when some professors told us that the syllabus isn’t a green color but a color of a US dollar and it had to be taken into account. And we took it into account up to the possible level. Several terms passed like this, some with difficulties some normally. For me, then, however, it was a mystery why some of my classmates used to appear only for the examination period driving expensive cars and still receive the excellent grades.

After a while, my time came to settle in a campus building. A wonderful inexpensive place was situated near the university buildings. All my friends were living nearby, not very chic, but for life, it was good enough. Although I did not understand why it took me almost a year to wait, because there were free rooms, and in some rooms, there were people who did not have anything to do with the university. There was another campus building next to us, more attractive. However, it was not for ordinary people, but for foreign students, more about it further.

Thus, time went by studying, working out, doing gigs and sports, and street fights as well. It continued up to the third year. Then we started to study the course of Cultural Studies. It seemed to be a great subject, but it wasn't. The professor was a Russian woman, and in the course of every lecture, she tried to convince us that the "Khokhly"[8] as she called us, had responsibility for all the troubles of the Russian people. Everyone kept silent. I tried to object and ask why such an ardent patriot of another country taught in the Ukrainian higher educational institution. The deputy dean called me, and both of them with my professor tried to explain to me that such guys as I caused two nations – Russian and Jewish not live peacefully. I was puzzled by such a statement, and I did not know what to do with it. In their tirade, they have mentioned Hitler and his book "Mein Kampf" a couple of times. I knew from school who was Hitler, but I was not familiar with his writings. Well, "Petrivka"[9] helped me, to get that book. The book did go well on the first read – there were a lot of strange words and all the talks about subjects I was not competent in, however, the sections on politics and propaganda were pretty good. Yeah, that wasn't the first book I had read in my life. I loved reading, and I had a lot of books. That was the first book of this kind of where my life will lead me further. Ironically my "favorite" professors lead me to this book. I read it and forgot it... for a while.

Then there was an incident that confused me. I already said that our campus building was next to another one the same building, but for foreigners, where largely the Turks lived. They had a strange lifestyle – they did not attend the lectures, they used to spend their time in the cafes, and they spent their money which they had a lot. Some even started their own business on campus territory hookah cafe, etc. They all got excellent grades, but when I talked to one of those "A" grade students, so he after four years of studying on technical university did not know what a discriminant was and how to calculate it. It seemed to be strange. Generally, why was it necessary to provide the foreigners with housing if they had enough money to buy an apartment, while your countrymen rent an apartment spending took last of his or her money on the outskirts of the city? Anyways. Once at evening a girl who lived a few floors above, came to us all beaten and

crying. She said that those Turks, from another building, raped her. Well, the thing was – our beautiful ladies had a habit of being close to those "people." I did not know their motivation – most likely money. But this was a completely different story, that girl was not seen there to have such contacts. She studied and lived on campus and simply got dragged into the car when she walked to the campus after classes. What happened next, no need to tell. So what we were supposed to do? At that time, there were no preconditions for racial issues; just some people did a very bad thing with a person we knew, no one considered nationality of the offenders if they were Ukrainians, our reaction would be the same. We gathered a lot of men, almost all the guys from our campus building, and went to our ‘overseas friends’. Those, to put it mildly, did not expect such a turn – apparently, this is not the first time they have done such a thing and got away with it. Not at this time. There was a big fight, with use of knives, bottles and armature wires. All this was stopped only by the police. Many of the Turks went to the hospital and then home to Turkey.

It seems that everything was fair, and I think even too easy because the bruises and their bones will heal, however, a question if the girl will recover and live with this. But justice in our country meant something else. The criminal cases were opened on many Ukrainian guys involved in that conflict, and many were expelled from the university instantly, the rest expelled later, even under different pretexts. This girl was also kicked out from the university, and her case disappeared from the police. What happened to the Turks? Nothing at all! Those who were hurt a lot left home to Turkey, and the rest moved to another campus building further from us. The university apologized to them for such behavior of Ukrainian students, and the police threatened to punish all Ukrainians. And how is this called? In your house came an alien, dishonored your relatives, you answered adequately, and you get punished? Imagine if this situation occurred in Turkey. Would many Ukrainians have escaped to home? Would someone apologize for them? That time the thoughts began to creep in that something is not right, not everything is as beautiful as the TV says, and good does not always win, as taught in childhood.

I got expelled from University at the next term. There was not everything clear about it. Even I passed all the exams, but the results weren't filled into to the exam list. Only the deputy dean was smiling when he met me. So, at the end of my studies, I switched to the distance study. I had to find a job. There were still some illusions that if you worked well, everything in your life would be fine. Intelligent people are always valued, and I was not a fool. It was a rather boring period, the jobs changed one after another: from a shop assistant to the sales manager, from the merchant to the supervisor. That time made clear if work honestly, you cannot earn money in this country. If you want to be richer than others, you have to deceive others and play a double game. Not those who work more and better make more money, but the one who has connections, who has wealthy relatives, the one who gets into bed with someone influent stole, killed or deceived earned much more. Such a flight of human vices on the way to their happiness.

I finished my studies, although I did not care about it during the last term. There were questions, and to find the answer to them was difficult. Like many young people, I got carried away with the right ideology. Although at that time I had a blurry understanding of what it was. I had the questions and was looking for the answers. I received the proper literature, and I found forums of all sorts of organizations on the Internet. But, like all people, I wanted to find the answer to a difficult question quickly, and I preferred the simplest one. That time the answer was illegal immigration.

Returning after studying to my home city, I learned on the forum that we had a movement that struggled with the immigrants; I called and met with them. The movement was called the Ukrainian Alternative.

Let's just say, the first meeting was not impressive. These from the Ukrainian Alternative were strange guys – most of them just drew alcohol and did the Hitler salutes. The shared opinions weren't discussed, and there was no structure as well. The organization consisted of a group of skinheads, soccer hooligans, and the street hooligans. Their hate to churkas[10] (everyone whom they did not like felt to this category) and

communists united them. It was not clear why they hate them, but they were accusing those categories of all faults. We met and had a discussion, then exchanged phone numbers and went away. In fact, there was nothing wrong with that movement. They were young people who loved their country and gathered in a not pro-Ukrainian city. How they loved Ukraine and why: it was another question. The problem there was a leader. He was not a foolish but very talented person who started this civil organization for the great goals and ideas, however in fact only for the greedy, selfish reasons. In the next years I met him many times, he switched many parties and organizations, selling himself to everyone possible and still seeking for those who would pay him more. But I have to admit he has the talent to gather masses.

The main activity of the Ukrainian Alternative was inactivity. The members gathered together, drank, smoked and discussed what they did not like in the country; it did not go further than just words. Well, except for some guys inspired by the speeches about the white race who gathered groups to hold occasional attacks on small local groups of Caucasians and their businesses. There were those who simply liked right radicals music and been a part of the organizations only for the concerts of such bands. Soccer hooligans were part of the soccer games, fought among them, but unlike the others, they actively were involved in sports. There were also other people who did not participate in the alcohol festivals and who raised serious topics, suggested their solution. They were not simple-minded, and some of them were sportsmen, so I tried to stick to such guys.

It turned out that this movement has its enemies – anti-fascists (they named Antifa). It was difficult to me to understand the difference. Antifa was the same as the right organization, they led the same style of life, but they listened to other music and discussed other topics. In general, the two active parts of the society fought with each other, mostly over the Internet discussions, but there were some real clashes.

I did not know how it used to be before, but while I was a member of the group, the leader of the movement did not participate in the fights. He gathered everyone, shouted that Antifa was in the city, everyone came and

looked for Antifa, but found nothing, and with a clear conscience, they went home.

I understood that everything is quite seriously after the death of Maxim Chaika. The guy killed in Odessa – the local Antifa stabbed him with a knife. In our city, such murders happened rarely, but there were some cases. In memory of Max, we held several marches; we promised to take revenge, but, as always in that movement, the march and the declarations was it.

Besides the enemies, we also had allies. Ukrainian Alternative (UA) was part of the Social-National Assembly (SNA). As communication went on with SNA members' people from Kharkiv, I began to understand that the paths we were moving would not lead anywhere. It turned out that SNA was the political wing of the paramilitary organization Patriot of Ukraine. I suggested to our leader to organize an elite combat unit under the rule of the Ukrainian Alternative. At first, he liked the idea. They proceeded to form the group Patriot of Ukraine, which was to become an assault unit of the UA. There were three of us: myself, Borsch, an ideological inspirer, Yaroslav whose call sign was "Yarylo." We were joined by a couple of other guys and formed a backbone of the future organization. From the facts about Patriot of Ukraine that we read on the Internet, it was decided not to drink alcohol, not to smoke, but to train and master the basics of the nationalist ideology. In the beginning, there were difficulties with the first two points. Immediately a conflict with UA occurred. They decided that we didn't have the same vision. We agreed with them and began to create an independent "unit" of the Patriot of Ukraine.

Chernihiv 2008

Chernihiv unit of Patriot of Ukraine

Chernihiv unit agitation post

PATRIOT OF UKRAINE

If you made use

Of the salty tears

Cutting the way
With your father's sword
If in the heat of battle
You found out what things are worth

Means as a child
You read the right books.

Ballad of Strife

At that time, the Patriot of Ukraine (PU) was very different from all the right-wing organizations. It was a militarized structure with a clear hierarchy, discipline, and ideology. It was not so easy to join the PU – you first need to pass a probationary period, to pass a fitness test and pass the exam in ideology. The quality wise, this movement was on the head above the rest, at that time. And the goals were sky-high, while the rest of the right movement priorities were to drink, do the Hitler salutes and beat Churkas, those people had thoughts about taking power in the country, and they had not just thoughts, but also an exact plan for how to accomplish it.

The ideology was Ukrainian Racial Social-Nationalism; it shall not be confused with National Socialism. These are completely different things, although they do not represent a special difference for an ordinary person. The ideology was based on the writings of Mykola Sciborsky. Social-Nationalism is precisely nationalism, but it formed on a social basis, an attempt to build a National State on the principles of social justice. And National Socialism is, how terrible wouldn’t sound for someone, is pure socialism, but in a particular state, with an admixture of national identity, anti-Semitism and racial theories. And socialism, as a transitional form between capitalism and communism, had in itself all the negative manifestations of both the first and the second phenomena.

In the future, from the designation of the ideology, the word "racial" would be taken away. Because most of the townsfolk lack educational knowledge and their minds were worked out by liberal propaganda, so that word could cause hysteria, and their subconsciousness would draw terrible pictures of concentration camps.

The symbol was the Idea of the Nation on the yellow canvas. In the future, it would be the most common symbol of the right movement of both Ukraine and Europe, as well as a favorite topic for talks in the Russian media propaganda, which considered it to be a symbol of the tank division of the SS or a portrait of Hitler in an encrypted form.

We did not have experience of building this kind of organizations nor any other kind of organizations. After consultations with the elders from Kharkiv and Kiyv, we distributed our duties. It was extremely difficult to

start, there were five of us in the city with a population of three-hundred-thousand. The city, that was far from the ideas of nationalism. But it did not matter – at that time all of us so inspired by the idea that nothing could stop us. In our organization branch we decided to focus not on the quantity of the people but on their quality – let us be few, but each would cost ten, which in the future returned the results.

It’s hard to remember all the moments, it was a wild cycle of events, all life was filled with the spirit of the revolution back then, every day foreshadowed adventures, feats and it was fraught with danger.

The main types of our activities were propaganda and training. Organizing good propaganda at that time was difficult. Everything the right movement was capable of doing was paint senseless graffiti and stickers on the walls. We decided to go the other way. Yes, stickers and graffiti remained, but it's more like assignments for beginners, sort of the first acceptance test to the organization – it's not so easy to explain to a police officer why you were writing a wall with "fascist" symbols at night. The main way to share our ideas was agitation posts. It is when several young guys dressed in the uniform, with a flag stayed in a crowded place and gave out pamphlets, in which there was, in our opinion, necessary information for the people. Our cronies were still around, for unforeseen situations, and such things happened often.

The first agitation post we decided to put in front of the stadium entrance on the day of the game of the local team. Everything seemed to be simple. We gathered, waited for the right time, got the flag... And then the time stopped... People going to football a minute ago just stopped... The birds stopped flying, the transport stopped... Even the wind disappeared... And then the zombie-apocalypse began – all those creatures began to run to us, screaming something incomprehensible about fascism, Hitler, the war... No one listened to what we were saying to them, it was a feeling that we were surrounded by World War II veterans, although most of them were unlikely to be more than 30. But we stood firm, we proved our rightness and handed out pamphlets. It was a serious test – it was not easy for three of us to prove something to an aggressive crowd, but we didn’t go away, it only tempered us. Often there were fights near such agitation posts. Once the cop came up to us, took a leaflet and exponentially began to tear it up. But the surprise was waiting for him in the form of a blow to his jaw. In his

simple brain was no thought that people themselves wrote this, printed and what completely he was missing – they believed in what was written.

The second type of activity was training. Almost everyone was engaged in some kind of sport, but we were well aware that hand-to-hand fighting is a good thing, but in street warfare, you needed something else. The emphasis was laid on knife fighting and tactical preparation. From that point, all members of the group had to carry weapons. As a rule, it was the knives, brass knuckles, pepper sprays, and the most dangerous ones even had pistols. Training sessions were held several times a week. There was no gym to exercise; that's why we gathered outside the city. It was all so fanatical that neither rain nor snow prevented us from exercising, very few people left such exercises without injuries. If there was a fist fight, it was full contact. It was rarely fought one-on-one, mostly two-on-one or three-on-one to make everything closer to the real conditions. Bruises, cuts, and hematomas had become our regular companions. There were difficulties with the knife combat exercise – in general, it was explained to us what it is, but there were no permanent instructors. They were replaced by video and literature from the Internet. Regularly we conducted sparrings. Rubber knives were rarely used; they were either wooden or blunt metal. Sometimes we used ordinary knives, and in an easy mode we fenced each other, it was done so that you got used to the real weapon held by an opponent in front of you. I don't think it needs to be explained how traumatic it was.

For the tactics, we had separate activities – so-called battle drills. Every weekend we gathered and made a hike. The Black Forest was our favorite place – it was about 10 kilometers from the city. The road was always difficult. Distance, swamps, full ammunition, equipment was heavy itself (then it was a backpack with food and things for training.) But on arrival to the place, everyone came to life and cheerfully started to train. The training exercises were very diverse; the Internet helped us a lot. We had variety workouts in pairs and in the small groups. At that time we did not have combat weapons, and we had not enough money for airsoft guns, the weapon was replaced by the sticks. We looked ridiculous, but in the future, the training saved many lives. We also practiced night hikes, like we were a reconnaissance group in the rear of the enemy. Often in such games, we got lost, came into a village and did our best to pass so that no one

noticed us. But it didn’t always go well. Once we lost the road and entered the village. The night. The silence. And we, 15 people, wore camouflage. We decided to make our way through the streets. The main enemy was the dogs who heard us, no matter how quietly we tried to go by them. We decided to crawl. We crawled. No one saw anything, the dogs slept. And suddenly I put my head on the post, raised my eyes, and that was not a post, but some guy was standing. He shouted something, but when the whole group rose up from the ground, he began to run. He was running in one direction, and we started running – in another... Basically, our reconnaissance mission failed, and the group was spotted.

A couple of times we learned how to cross rivers, and we scared people who were resting there. With the whole equipment we swam across the water body, and then we made rafts and tried silently to get to the other shore. In one of these swimming it turned out that some people did not know how to swim, but in order not to lost face in front of the fellows, they got on the raft.

Once, after seen a lot films about the Special Forces, we decided to have a survival drill. We went into the forest, left all food at home, well, at least I believed so. The first day we camped and trained. There was no problem with water: we took it from the lakes and boiled it. On the second day, we wanted to eat. The hunt began. We were looking for snakes, but we found only lizards. It was not very good food, but better than nothing. But then lizards suspected that something terrible was happening and did not appear anymore. There was a problem with fish: we failed to fish. We saw rabbits, but it was not possible to kill them with a stick. We decided to make a raid on the neighboring village, it was autumn time, and potatoes were in the gardens. We ate a bit and went to sleep. I woke up from the rustling of packages and aromas of sausage... It turned out that not all the food was left at home. I protested very much, but the sandwich made me calm. The group was alive and the task completed.

We went hiking no matter what. The brightest memories left one of the winter hikes. Our fellow-members from neighboring cities came to visit us. We chose the longer hike about 15 kilometers. We went out. The forward and closing patrols tried to implement what they had learned earlier. It's very hard to walk; it was snow up to our knees, clothes, food, and water for three days. But no one complained. We reached the camping

spot close to the night, camped and put up posts. The morning began with jogging, then breakfast, tea from pine needles. The whole day we shared our experience with the brothers-in-arms. They were more experienced than we were; some of them had experience of taking part in military training. In return, we showed the methods of struggle and told cleverly learned phrases from the books. At night we had a combat alert, firecrackers explosions, and a forced march. All-clear. So 3 days passed at this pace, all were very tired, the frost then reached -20ºC, but it did not scare anyone. We had our own atmosphere. The night, the forest, the frost, the fire, the young guys in camouflage, no alcohol and very strange conversations... We talked about the revolution, underground, natiocracy... our rituals, our dreams... new people... People, who in a couple of years, would change the country.

Over time, the drills became more complicated. It wasn't only the hikes anymore, but assignments. For example, a train would be on a route at such time. The task: to get to the specified place, at the specified time, to put smoke bombs and depart. I did not know how the police responded to all of that, I think they didn't because their job is not to care.

We've developed not only physically, but also mentally, because a revolutionary social-nationalist spends as much time in the gym, as in the library. Every week ideological meetings took place. At those events, one of the higher members had a speech, mostly there were lectures on history and politics, we discussed our ideological documents (which everyone had to know and understand). Then we clarified incomprehensible moments to understood, everyone shared their thoughts and discussed what we read. In the end, some tasks were given for the next meeting, as a rule; it was to write a paper on one of the ideological themes or an essay on a free theme. This was making us very different from other organizations. There were many right-wingers, but what they wanted, where they were going – hardly anyone could answer. While we had a clear ideology; everyone understood the purpose of being there. Of course, it hampered the growth of the number of activists. Not everyone wanted to train, read and develop skills. It was much easier to do nothing but just listen to the far-right music.

Not much to say about finances. The entire budget of our unit was membership fees, but, since almost no one worked, there were no membership fees. I had two jobs, guys had gigs somewhere. All our money spent on the organization activities.

In addition to internal training, we also needed public actions. At first, it was a kind of litter picking, jogging and visiting the activities organized by others. But as time went on, our group became bigger. Approximately six months later, the number of our active supporters reached 20-30 people. Not many people, but those are people whom we could rely on; assign any task to them, with the certainty that they would complete it. We decided to hold our own action. October 14[11] was coming. All the right-wingers on that day went to Kyiv, there were some big marches, nothing interesting. Besides, for one exception. I'm talking about the march on October 18, when the Patriot of Ukraine, Ukrainian National Labor Political Party, and the Bratstvo[12] had a separate anti-system march, that day a mass brawl with the police took place, but that date could be truly regarded as the birthday of the New Right Movement. That year nothing like this was planned, and so we risked marching for the first time the Ukrainian Insurgent Army march in our city. The idea was good, but somehow it was scary. A couple of days before the scheduled date we shared information in the VK[13] and posted the invitations around the city. Nobody else had done it before. We were not at all sure that there would be anyone other except us. We did not prepare for an ordinary action, but as for military action. The city was far from to be a pro-Ukrainian, there was enough ethnic crime, and even opponents from the leftwing are enough. But, to our surprise, 70-80 people gathered in the appointed place, in addition to us, which was quite impressive for our city. The police were pulled from the whole region, and they accompanied the convoy and stood along the entire route. We had an impressive appearance – the first rows marched as one line, the Idea of the Nation flag was fluttering above them and the city was shaken by the war cry "Glory to the Nation." The leader of the movement was clearly overdone with his outfit – a long black leather cloak and a yellow bandage with the Idea of the Nation symbol on his shoulder, but this only added the entourage our marching group. Everything went well, no one dared to interfere with us. More than a week all the local media wrote about that action and people whispered about the "fascists."

In addition to such activities, the other, direct actions took place – we called it “Operation Leisure." For example, to burn the office of the Communists – it was something like a dedication to the Organization, after

which you were handed a chevron of the Patriot of Ukraine, which you could proudly wear during the organization events. But it was the simplest task. I won’t write about everything. There were patrols when small groups of 3-5 people walked around the city, looked for the guys who did not behave appropriately, here we polished our hand-to-hand and knife fighting skills. Fight against illegal construction sites. First, we warned developers that local people don’t want this construction, then we broke the fence, but if it did not work, the whole construction was on fire one night. Surprisingly some local became the problem of such actions. They really did not want constructions to replace their local playgrounds and parks, but except for whining, they didn’t do anything else. The maximum on what they were able to do to stand aside while we were clashing with the developer side.

Smoke grenades flew into the stores opened without the consent of the tenants. The cars of the officials, who had offended people, suddenly catch on fire. Antifascists, conducting their conferences, were afraid to leave the hotel without a police escort, and the police did not want to accompany them to avoid provoking a mass fight. It often resulted in articles about "fascist terror" were published in the mass media. But it was rather stupid. We had nothing to do with fascism, and it was difficult to call terror what we did. Was it terror: to punish people who did not want to obey the law? Was it terror: to burn cars of the officials and dealers, who got pretty brazen? It was a fight for justice if the state did not want to provide the justice, then there would be the people who do this themselves.

Thus, time went by. The mutts were afraid to attack us, knowing what kind of an answer would follow. Other right-wing groups did not add to us and invented terrible myths – the seclusion of our group gave a lot of possibilities for the imagination. All the Patriot of Ukraine units were developing, and the movement went beyond its usual framework. It was noticeable on the visit of actions in Kharkiv. For us it was always an event, to go and meet those people, they were the standard of everything; thanks to them we understood many things and became the ones what we are now. The trips were very exciting. The Kyiv-Kharkiv train was always full of very interesting characters who were looking for adventures, and we, as polite people, could not refuse them.

The first major action was a march against illegal immigration. Winter, before the march, terrible snowfall started, but still a lot of people

gathered. It was very symbolic, the convoy of the Patriot of Ukraine making its way through the snow... All the time when the Organization existed was difficult, but we always could manage all challenges. After the march, we went to Rymarska Street, that time very little known name, but in the future one of the most exemplary places for us. There were had discussions with senior chiefs of our organization, with the Leader, understanding that if in Kharkiv it was possible to form such a large-scale organization, why we were complaining about difficulties in our city.

It charged us with energy, you came home, and one more week you engaged in business at some kind of euphoria, you'd felt like a part of the great movement and dreamed of a bright future.

The Big Winter Drill near Kharkiv, where I saw military equipment for the first time, well, it used to be real combat equipment, at that moment it could be used only as airsoft guns, but still, it was something. There were a minor obstacle course, assault mountaineering, and burning building. More than a hundred people were practicing tactics, they explain to us how to move, how to cover each other, and a good instructor taught us how to fight with a knife. Then the storming of the building, the maps, groups. It was all so unusual. It ended, however, not very well –a wall fell on two our fellow-brothers.

Dedication to the Organization was held according to a special ceremony. All the action took place on the Donetsk Hillfort[14]. It was a kind of an internal organizational mystery, during which the most worthy fighters were allowed to take the oath of the Organization. Night, torches, battle banners, Wagner's music, people who swear allegiance to their country, their brothers and the movement ... These are those unforgettable moments that does not allow us to give up during the most difficult periods of your life.

Everything went in its own order, we got political ambitions. A congress was planned to be held in the House of Trade Unions on Khreshchatyk Street, Kyiv but we weren't allowed to hold it. Several cordons of police and communists blocked the entrance, so we had left with a march and a picket in one of the parks in Kyiv. Politicians tried to play us, and we tried to play them.

They could not play blind and ignore the Organization anymore. The first attempts to arrest the participants began. We faced this problem during the New Year’s period. The agitation tent of the Moscow Patriarchate[15] was burned down, and the cops began to arrest the activists indiscriminately. Thus, for the first time, almost all the staff, we found ourselves in the police. We were taken to different rooms and questioned. Half an hour later they got in panic – all of us kept silence. And we said only that we did not know each other, although we had each other’s phones in our mobiles. A drunken cop screamed in hysterics that we had disrupted his holiday and he was very surprised that all of our guys were sober. He asked: "Aren’t you sick, are you? Why don’t you drink? You are definitely not normal". We’ve been kept there for several hours. They took our fingerprints, photographed and released us. It's fun, as recognition of your work.

Of course, not everything was so good. Other right-wing groups acted with the Patriot. In our city, we had the Ukrainian Alternative, which later became the Third Position. We tried to cooperate with them, but they, as a rule, did not go into contact, but they were engaged in incomprehensible things; join the political party Svoboda or work with another party. Besides that, soccer hooligans were increasing they presence, but in our city they were apolitical. There were two formations of soccer hooligans: "kraudi" and "fsyu." The second broke the first with the help of Kyiv friends and was involved in sports. There were attempts to establish contact, but, as it turned out, the leaders of that movement wanted only to fight in the field and avoided the rightists. All that was not critical, but at one point someone started the fashion for autonomism. Autonomy is a European practice when an organization, due to repressions and strong law enforcement agencies cannot exist in an open format and started to work into small clandestine groups linked together. The idea was good, we will take advantage of it in the future when repressions hurt us very much, but at that moment it was senseless. That time the state was not fully consolidated and didn’t care for the rightists, the freedom for actions was tremendous for developing an organization or starting the party. Agitation, marches, actions were held more or less normally, with small skirmishes, but without consequences. And then there was the idea of autonomy. Everyone put

black overalls on, listened to hardcore music, and talked conspiracy about the almighty system and terror. The trouble was that the idea also challenged the Patriot organization, many people let it into their minds. Why? It is very simple. In the Patriot of Ukraine, you had to act; you had no time for fashion, yourself and concerts. Regular training and actions took away all your time, and if you did not believe in social-nationalism, you just could not live like this for long. But with autonomy, it was easier. Do nothing. Have an account in the VK, listen to hardcore music and write angry comments. It was not necessary to be engaged in terror, it was enough to write more about it. A couple of guys left us saying that we were not enough Nazis. I was surprised, I did not know how to accept such evaluation, and I never considered myself to be a Nazi. What's the most ironical – one of those guys will join a left wing, will be disclosing his former brothers-in-arms, and then will join and serve in the most right regiment. Strange time, the right organizations were not in power, and during that period they simply fell down to marginal Internet communities. We were upset, but it did not particularly affect the activities, it became more difficult to hold mass actions, autonomy frightened everyone with total surveillance of the system, but everything went in its natural order.

At this time, we made two attempts to raise the revolution, not to begin it, but attempted to lead it. The first was the “Against Everyone”[16] action held together with organization “Brotherhood.” The main message was that all politicians lied, and therefore we did not need to investigate their lies but simply kick them all out. We stood on the Maidan; almost no people came and at night so-called “Afghanians”[17] on payroll destroyed our tent camp. The second chance was so-called “Tax Maidan” action. It was a more large-scale phenomenon. The government tried to unreasonably press on the businessmen, and they came to Kyiv in large numbers. We tried to radicalize the process, but the hustler is a hustler, they were more used to negotiating, and all our efforts were in vain. Although, we gained the experience, which would come in handy very soon.

We visited L’viv on May, 9. The authorities were trying to play the language issue[18], working with the regions and, it seemed to me, then Russia started launching the processes that would lead to the war in our country. The essence of the trip was following: the mummified veterans

with St. George's ribbons[19] would come to L’viv to put flowers while holding Red Soviet Banners to the graves of fallen during World War II. The local population met that idea negatively; they had their own opinion of those events. We went there only to watch what would happen. But we couldn’t only watch. The whole L’viv was crowded with the Berkut[20], there were the buses full with 25 years old pseudo-veterans, and most of them were obviously in some sports. The Berkut immediately started provoking people, pushing everyone and giving the cover for "sportsmen" who had arrived in the buses. We could not just look at this and started to form groups. All the action was to take place near the monument. When we arrived there, the Berkut made a corridor for "young veterans" who waved a red flag and tried to yell something about Russia. We organized and approach the guests who had arrived. It was the first skirmish with the Berkut. We had been superseded. We took out sticks, stones and threw a smoke grenade. The Berkut began to withdraw. I hit one of the Berkut in the jaw, he is losing coordination, and I snatched out his rubber baton, and in a minute, I am using it to beating his colleagues with big pleasure. But then members of political party Svoboda appeared, they started negotiations and made agreements, it became boring. We were trying to leave, but somehow it's not convenient with the rubber baton. Then a member of party Svoboda appeared and said that he would hide it and then give me back. We did not really believe him. But I gave him the trophy. He never returned it, and he told everyone that he had taken it during the battle. This is the essence of that party, and such people are its members. We would often meet with them, and they would always show their rotten nature. The rest of the day patrolling the streets L’viv and catching the lost "veterans."

Next were the elections in Vasylkiv town. There we had presented ourselves not like an ordinary civil organization, but as civil organizations with the power to be reckoned with. The process of elections itself was held as usual in our country. Some councilmen tried to remove the others, and if failed, then in the voting and counting process power scenario. Altogether, vote or not, but who has to be will be elected. In our case, there were 3 councilmen. That event seemed doubtful to me, there was not much sense from such activity, although the experience of participating in such campaigns proved to be very useful.

The elections had also highlighted ambiguity in our views; it was what about our group. We began to get closer to the politicians and, as it turned out, not all of them were Churkas and like so. We began to study the right ideology literature more and more, and many new questions arose. In particular, it was the issue of elites. It seemed everything to be clear; those most worthy ruled the rest. But for me it was different. The voting candidates, those most worthy were not right-winged, but the hustlers and if they replace another one who is in charge nothing would change. We turned to the book works of our opponents. They were even more confusing. Hegel’s works were read, but not sure that we understood, we switched to read Marx’s works. A more detailed study of the left ideology widened the horizon, but there were still a lot of questions left. Classical Marxism, with its " social existence, determines consciousness“ is a very beautiful thing, but Lenin had already realized that social existence was fine. However, most people did not care how they were living and offered a soft substitute for universal awareness of the problem by the vanguard of the working class, which was the right definition of elite. We had a plenty disputes, which still stay open.

Such an upsurge of the Organization was not going stay unnoticed by the government. They could no longer just turn a blind eye to the growing social-national movement. However, no actions were taken yet.

The activities began after the biggest march of the Patriot in Ukraine in Kharkiv. The march was timed to coincide with the anniversary of Maxim Chaika's death. All the "units" of the Patriot of Ukraine existed at that time gathered there. The heads of units had a drill before the march. We gathered from the very morning and moved towards the bus station. For me it was a very unusual sight – more than a hundred people, in camouflage, with weapons (airsoft guns), were walking through the city. At the bus station, we tried to get on the bus to go out the city. No free seats, so everyone merged as they could, and then, just before departure, two “bodies” came into the bus. The conductor immediately said that they did not need to go there, but the guys stranded firmly in their commitment to enter. Well, they got in, and the bus drove off. Those guys were pretty drunk, and they were very bored. Half the way long they questioning everyone about camouflage. They were insanely tormented by the question: why were we going to the forest? Everyone was holding back, the senior

member was with us too, but his face showed that he would not have the patience for a long time. At one of the longer stops the guy started to push us back into the bus, and not easy, but so brazenly, by the foot... And that was it. Our guys, who had been suffering more than an hour of those ‘animals,’ broke down. They chased them out of the bus, to culturally explain to them that it's unacceptable to behave like this. "Creatures" didn’t get it one the first time and explanatory work was conducted one more time. Everything would be fine, but there was a police car driving behind us. The bus was pulled over, and everyone had to step out. An investigation round began. We were standing all in the line, everyone is like another, as preselected and leader Krook was there with us. Underdogs tried to identify who had beaten them. It was difficult because they had been beaten by everyone. Cops took a few of us, and the rest continued their journey into the forest. No one actually was left behind; a support group followed our guys to the police department because it was just illogical for everyone to go there. After a couple of hours, they were released.

In the forest, we made a camp. We divide into two groups. Then some car drove up, it's clear that somebody wanted to revenge for the offended guys, but the volley of grapeshot in their direction repulsed any desire. The drill itself passed in harsh conditions because of night time. All the exercises and workouts were in the destroyed hangars, and the only source of light was the torches. Especially it was scary to climb at the height of the third floor when you could not see anything in front of you. Everything ended with a storming of the conditional enemy's positions, and when the conditional opponent was defeated, we went back to the city.

A couple of guys and I went to Doctor’s place to wash and to sleep before the march. After a short rest, we were on the way to Rymarska Street. When we were near the office, we noticed a little protest nearby... It was the Communists protesting against something there. We looked around. There were three of us and three of them… It looked to be fair. But, as it turned out, we saw only three of them but not the rest. An unequal battle began, the banners of the Reds were bursting, but grandmothers and some “roosters” wearing the singlets helped them. We fought them and then retreated. Me and in the future a commander of my company, and also soon a political prisoner, had a lot of abrasions, but we got a sense of accomplishment.

This March had become the largest since the establishment of the Organization. More than a thousand people under the banner of the Idea of the Nation walked along the streets of Kharkiv. At the head of the convoy was the Leader, then the civil organization “Natsional’na Samooborona,” the “Patriot,” and the other supporters. Somewhere in the middle of the road, a skirmish arose. A careless guy snagged either the Leader or someone from the seniors. Having been punched in his face, he ran to the cops, they in their turn tried to detain a couple of people, but... came upon a hard rebuff. The first cordon of the police was simply dared, dozens of shoulder straps and caps went to the sky, and then we used to smoke and flares. The Leader reassured everyone, we repulsed our people, but the cops were already at quite a considerable distance from us. At the end of the rally were fiery speeches from an armored car.

It seemed to me that time the authorities realized that it's time to do something with us. I will not describe how everything happened in Kyiv and Kharkiv, there was everything much tougher – the arrests, shooting, stabbing. At our place, everything began with a pseudo-terrorist act. Somebody was rumored to plant a bomb in the center of the city, and the Security Service in Ukraine heroically cleared it with bare hands. I was detained at work. I sat there and read the news when I looked out at the window I saw some loud activity. I did not pay any attention immediately, but then I heard footsteps behind my back, I turned around, and there five men entered the door, others forced the second door. It made no sense to run away, and there was nowhere to run. I understood that they got me, now they would take me home and do a search. And I realized there at home at the moment there was something for which you could spend in jail a long time. Trying to cheat, asking permission to use the toilet and dialing people from my second cellphone to ask them to get everything out of the house. I am trying to win some time and asking them to get dressed, they wanted to take my computer, I said that I had worked at every computer, and they had only sanctioned to take one. They walked me on the street where everything was blocked like if there was a very dangerous terrorist was caught. We headed home, there’s a search... The whole house was being searched. They approached the bookshelf and searched for forbidden literature. There were books about the SS, but those were encyclopedias. They saw the My Struggle (Mein Kampf), but they thought that it was about martial arts.

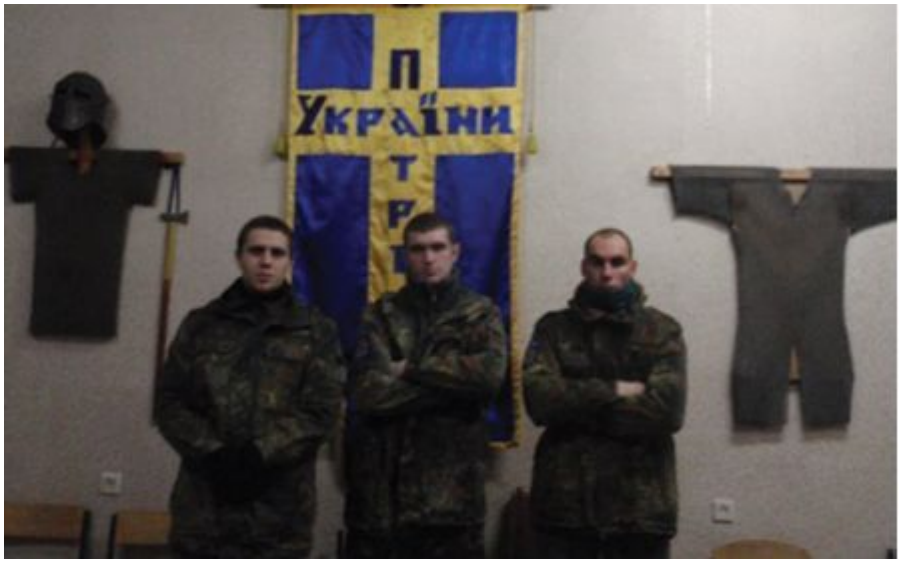
There was nothing found inside the house, we were going to go to the police department, but they noticed the shed. They went there. It's dirty there, they did not want to get smeared... but I could see the gun handle sticking out from the plastic bag...Their laziness won, and they missed their chance. There were a lot of questions in the police department, but in fact, there they had nothing on hand to use for arresting me. I signed a written undertaking not to leave the place. Then the case somehow disappeared. Apparently, they considered being sufficient to have arrested the Kyiv and Kharkiv senior members of the organization. To avoid problems, I am moving to Kyiv and taking a rest for a while.

On arrival, we met with our group. The chief announced the decision to leave the Organization (his parents gave money for his own business, for him not to suffer from "nonsense"). His deputy went to work in Kyiv. There were not so many people left; most of them were not determined to take decisive action. We stayed several people who decided to work as an autonomous group, but to maintain contact with the Organization. Even sometimes, the whole Organization moves the activities in the underground.

A rally in Chernihiv 2009

Joined drills of Chernihiv and Konotop branches of the Organization

UPA march in Chernihiv 2009



Foremen of Chernihiv branch of the Organization Yaroslav, Siveryanyn, Woland

Chernihiv branch of Patriot of Ukraine August 24th, 2010

Nizhyn town January 29th, 2010

Rally against immigrant criminality in Kharkiv 2010

THE MEN FROM THE NORTHERN CAPITAL

I'll take deceit of the city,
I am going to starve them out, too.
I will be beating, maiming, hanging them up
And shooting.
I will approve the riots, too.
And the rest I couldn’t care less!

Not my concern

The underground activity, in our case, was the very strong term to use. We did not have such a pressure on us as part of our organization had in Kharkiv. There the guys actually fled from cops and could not feel themselves calmly until the end of the Revolution in 2014.

We had a soft version of repressions. Cops first very pressed us, and then everything calmed down like it supposed to be. What to do in that situation, we did not know, the backbone of the people remained, but most of the rest just left. Those who yesterday were just afraid to come up to us, tried to hit us in the back in every possible way. Everyone felt that the Organization collapsing. There was a lot of dirt about us added on the Internet, and even those who were considered to be our people tried to join the process of destroying our movement. It seemed to them that destroying the Patriot of Ukraine, they would gain some significance, but, as it turned out later, they were not happy for a long time, and they did not have any benefits.

The forms of activity had to be changed. The open agitation did not give any effect, and at that time it was fraught. We were joining the activities held by other organizations, tried to establish ties, but as a rule, all new structures were meaningless and focused on their own priorities. The autonomous movement was too weak, it actively contributed the collapse of the Patriot, but it could suggest nothing instead for our organization. A lot of new movements rose up from the extreme right to the ultra-left, but all their fight stayed on the Internet.

We tried to reconsider the ideology. We, or more precisely, I found the works by Marxists and Trotskyists. We analyzed Smith's works to understand how money works and why people depend on them.

While functioning on autonomous principle, we still tried to hit the system. Everyone used to think that the first "Molotov cocktails" were used on Grushevs’kogo Street[21], but before that time we had actively used them for our own purposes. We used them for burning the places where alcohol was sold illegally to the communities and sometimes used to set police

offices on fire. But all such activities were not planned beforehand; it was just a reaction to the events.

One of our guys began to promote the idea of a soccer movement – a talented guy, and if he was eager to get something, he did it and achieves serious results. There was no significant soccer movement in the city. There was an ultras movement, they were patriotic, but they did not care about the topics not connected with soccer. There was one ultras group, with a good staff, but they were interested only in sports and fights and positioned themselves to be apolitical.

Our guy formed the company and began to go to the ultras sector during the games. They behaved defiantly, threw smoke bombs, and organized scuffles with the police. But their activities were not limited by the abovementioned. They provided free drills for youth; they hold actions of direct action where people were introduced to the right ideology. That group quickly expanded, began to influence the entire ultras movement. After a series of provocations on the stadium sectors, they decided to move to a separate warriors sector. This is a special sector, there are no random people allowed. Thus how the time of 'The Men of the Northern Capital' began.

At the heart of this movement was a guy from the Patriot of Ukraine, and then we have joined him. The desperate company had gathered and hard times for the police of the city came. Each soccer game ended in with a fight, the fires flew in the cops during the game. We had our own atmosphere, our rules, and procedures. Of course, the soccer itself was not forgotten. At first, the clogs for the youth team were made; the staff increased, and at some times our ultras group was one of the most promising in Ukraine. We were not afraid to fight even with eminent and strong rivals ultras.

It was a good school. Here the character was tempered, a real friendship was born. However, many people left, not everyone could fight. It was a sort of exam. Even good sportsmen after mass fights sometimes did not return any more. There we had learned the skills that would come in handy to us so soon. Departures, scouts, calculation of opponents, assaults, fight. That was the right-wing youth's life.

At this time, the left movement was also improving. They had one nice soccer ultras group plus they often had visits by their friends from

Belarus. It's become not safe walking on the city streets. Because of our negligence, we once paid the price. Those guys were on the free hunt; they surveyed the Internet and found a place and time when our ultras group would gather. The main cast at that time dispersed the gay parade in Kyiv. Young members and a couple of older ones were fighting for everyone; there were about 10 of them, and on the other side – the selective composition of their staff, about 40 men. All were beaten very much but stayed alive.

The left movement picked up the topic of student movements and organized a couple of unions. We did not lag behind and tried to bend our line.

Even then time we felt that something was preparing in the country. Multi-thousand marches of students, crowds of coppers, paid provocateurs, the Zaporozhet's case, the "Nezhynsky Robinhoods," the build-up of the language issue. Particular attention was drawn to the event with the Pavlychenko's family case when the entire soccer movement stood up on their defense.

The activities were not held without accidents. Cops tried to prune everything. The 7th police department, engaged in killings and kidnappings of the activists. We were no longer allowed to go to the stadium tribunes, which caused the fights with the Berkut units near the stadium. Once, after a mass brawl, we managed to drive the police out of the stadium. Law enforcers were nervous, and they often tried to use weapons. It radicalized us.

It could not be said that people's opinion was on our side. The actions were increasingly massive, but it was only thanks to soccer movement, from which we drafted the resource of youth. The older generation just shook their heads, went to work and did not understand why they had no money. A large layer of dissatisfied appeared, but they could not formulate their wishes. They were assisted by the "opposition." Their limit of dreams was the European Union.

The Maidan began. Not exactly the Maidan, but a rally of students in support for European integration. We were not attracted to this, everything seemed childish, a couple of times we went there on Independence square – it was not impressive. But some of our guys were already there, and it gave a chance for a different development of events. We understood that

something could happen from that point. We did not care about the European Union and European values, we would rather be called opponents to these values. And the authorities made a mistake. Apparently, the authorities did not know the saying: "Provocation – repression – revolution."

To our greater chagrin, the December, 1st almost completely passed without our interference. We did not think that such a movement would organize, and finally, the authorities would get an adequate response. On that day we were having a group fight with “horses” which we lost. My head ached terribly, and I came home and went to rest. When woke up I read the news. I couldn’t believe my eyes... The reason, for which we lived, began…

The heroes games 2011

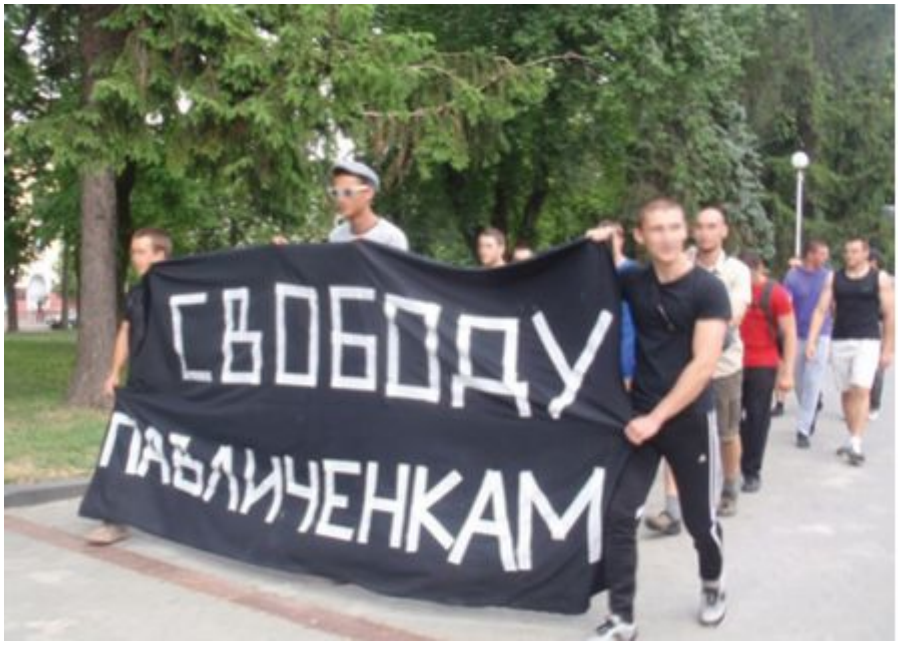
Short marathon of Agile and Youth 2012

Soccer fans 2013

Soccer fans hold a sign “Freedom for politic prisoners” 2013

Soccer hooligans fight Army Legion vs. Praetorian Guard 2013

Soccer hooligans fight Army Legion vs. Praetorian Guard 2013



Rally in support of Pavlyuchenko family in Chernihiv 2013

Another rally in support of Pavlyuchenko family in Chernihiv 2013

REVOLUTION

The time of troubles –
The phantom of liberty on horseback,
Blood up to the knee,
As if in a wild dream,
Pampered people - beating the old gods,
Praying people - waiting for the righteous words.

Time of Troubles

by Kipelov

It begins... But not really. From the very beginning, it was clear that the Maidan was not organized itself. For over a year, the so-called Opposition tried to shake the situation, the authorities actively helped it, when arrested activists and breached up rallies. Actually, those who pay the piper, calls the tune. The Maidan was a peaceful, lever of pressure on the authorities. All people stood and waited to enter the association with EU, and the Opposition was bargaining for the positions. The December 1st[22] was a surprise. The majority of people gathered to show their dissatisfaction with the actions of the law enforcement, but only to show up – no one was going to act proactively. And something went wrong. Political establishment missed the fact that a new generation rose and they were not so easily ruled and wanted changes and ready to give their lives for them. The seizure of the KCSA[23], the House of Trade Unions, and an attempt to storm President's Administration showed that young people were ready to fight. The Opposition threw the whole resource on the suppression of the uprising. Party leaders called everyone to be provocateurs and tried to catch them to hand them to the police. Ordinary people joined that process. It became clear that in difficult situations, the authorities and the Opposition act together. It could be seen even on the night of dispersal of the students when Ruslana[24] dumped exactly before the dispersal, and Yatsenyuk[25] with the Berkut evacuated the stage audio equipment. The Opposition did its work, and neutral people, who supported the insurgents, were withdrawn. No more than 50 people stayed to fight with government forces. The authorities allowed the Berkut units to attack. Within a few minutes, everyone was dispersed. They acted harshly, demonstrating strength, in the hope of intimidating all, but it only embittered us, we saw the true face of the enemy.

On December 2, it was not safe for the revolutionaries to stay on the Maidan. The Opposition arranged a hunt for active youth, distributed pamphlets with an appeal to catch provocateurs; the majority of the Maidan activists supported such an initiative. Therefore, we moved only in groups to be able to resist.

We stayed in KCSA building. There were staying members of Political Party Svoboda, civil group C14 and civil group Narnia[26]. We went to the House of Trade Unions to civil group Right Sector. One of the most important men there at that time was a guy from our city. We had a discussion. Everything seemed to be good with them, but the freedom to act was limited to their groups. We decided to make our own band, but we remembered about the Narnia. The Narnia consisted of a small number of activists without certain ideas and aspirations, and they were distinguished by their unbridled desire to fight. We decided to join that group and, if possible, to direct their revolutionary energy in the right direction. At that time there was still no special distinction between the Narnia, the Right Sector, and the others – all were acting together.

We started work on correction of mistakes. The December 1st showed there were not enough of us to carry out an independent assault. We needed either to increase our people in dozens of times or to make ordinary activists of the Maidan to support us or at least to stand by us and not interfere. Before that, the supporters from our own cities were agitated, and we also tried to find radically oriented people between locals. The important point was to establish solid groups and coordinate the interaction between them. Not to repeat the with seizing the Central Post Office: when a small group of protesters entered the building to seize the place in the name of the revolution, but a woman janitorial worker with the cry "just not while my shift" drove everyone out onto the street.

There was no issue with food. The Opposition had invested a lot of money to ensure that their supporters got to eat. At the same time, not indifferent citizens brought supplies to the KSCA building. We were pretending to be ordinary supporters of the EU and used it to supply our groups with those goods.

That time we only could dream about the weapons. Homemade bulletproof vests, helmets, construction safety glasses, propane cylinders, soccer shields, baseball bats, fittings, hammers, and knives were all available arsenal at that time. Heavy artillery was considered to be fireworks and Molotov cocktails. All this was hidden and not displayed. At that time against us were government power, the Opposition and the majority of Maidan activists.

We were very disappointed with the revolutionary movement in our city. All those who were members of any organization: the Patriot, the Third Position or others, took an active part in the revolution, they might not have always been on the Maidan, but they came and did good deeds. But soccer ultras stayed at home. Big ultras organizations with huge guys, suddenly remembered that they have work to go, a family, and there are Berkut who shoots, but they only could do a fist fight. There were such people in our ranks, but it's good that not as many as in other groups. Fortunately, not all cities have such soccer fan clubs.

We began to map the area. Previously, I was not very interested in where is the President's administration, the Verkhovna Rada, and the rest government buildings, but now it had become very important. The problems were created by people from the political parties: Udar, Svoboda, and Batkivschyna[27], who set up a watch to catch provocateurs, and the most stoned ones lined up in front of the lines of the government law enforcement troops, so that no one could throw a stone on them. It surprised me and angered me. It was a revolution where authorities shall be overthought, and building stormed. But those "revolutionaries" guarded the government district and the watchdogs of the regime. The people on the Maidan were not led by their heart or ideological postulates – the TV dictated the manner of behavior.

We combed out the area, made plans to build up strong points and weapons shops, but it turned out to be in vain, – all weapons and ammunition from nearby areas were taken out.

Conducting work with the people is difficult. People did not particularly want to consider the ideology. They muttered what they had memorized: "The EU, democracy, freedom of speech, "Yuli– vol'u,"" although they hardly understood the meaning of those words. They were told in what to believe, and most did not even bother to understand the questions, "What is a democracy? Why Yulia Tymoshenko must be free?" And no one was going to realize the depth of the problem. They confined themselves to take Yanukovych away, seeing it as an ultimate goal.

The authorities, in their turn, also did not waste their time. The thugs for hire were taken to Kyiv, mainly from the cities of Donbas region, fighters and all sorts of police veteran structures. It was not so easy to get to

the Maidan– they checked all people near the entrances; the whole city was filled with inciting agents. They began to come to our places of residence registration and intimidate our relatives. The kidnapping of activists began. The President announced the adoption of new laws. In those laws, almost all civil protest activities prohibited rallies, meetings, while government power of control as wiretapping became easier allowed, etc. The Ukrainian parliament treacherously, without counting the votes, accepted all laws. The storm was coming. Even ordinary people could not stand it any longer.

Then there was the second attempt to overthrow the Lenin's monument. For our group, Lenin was not a target. I was very bad about such activities, but we had to provoke the Berkut on our territory. We gathered, threw a cable on the statue, pulled ... and there was no Berkut. Evidentially, after the first attempt to protect the monument they wanted to do it no longer. The monument fell – it's a kind of historical event, but the action did not fully serve its planned mission.

The first attempt to mop up the Maidan and storm KSCA building was made. The government forces took advantage of a small number of activists and went on the assault. At first, they just hid behind shields. They managed to reach Khreshchatyk[28]. Several buses with cops drove right under the entrance, trying to break in. They were met with fire extinguishers and hoses. About two hours of bear play and dogs with their tails between their legs withdrew. People were coming on the Maidan, and when their number reached several thousand, the Berkuts was retreating under that pressure. It was small, but it was a victory for us.

There was almost no free time. We were making bulletproof vests, shields, chose the correct safety glasses. At that time, the Maidan was singing an anthem every hour and listening to the "clowns" from Opposition on the stage, we were not even allowed to come close there. The active part of people built barricades. The Maidan turned into some kind of a fortress.

As so it continued for more than a month. We felt almost utterly discouraged although we had done a lot of work, but the result was zero. Although ordinary people start saying more often that it's time to do something, it's enough to stand still in front of the scene. For me, the position of ordinary activists was very incomprehensible, they agreed that

change of government was good, but upon them, it was necessary to choose someone from the already given list. Why did not we make that list ourselves? Let us assume that the most active people in the state gathered on the Maidan, they were ready to bear deprivation for the sake of common goals. Why then did not make lists of the future government from those people? And in general, it was time to talk about the very structure of the state. Was it worthwhile changing the economic model? But no! People considered themselves to be patriots, we were considered to be fascists, and there were no other candidates rather than Yatsenyuk and Turchynov for them. Political technologists did their best.

A big Viche[29] was planned, as a protest against recently passed dictatorial laws. Since the very morning, more and more people had been coming to the Maidan. The truth was, they looked strange – they protested against the dictatorship, many of them pulled pots, masks of bunnies on their heads[30], etc. It was annoying, another attempt to convert the revolution into a peaceful protest. We listened to what was happening during the Viche. The Opposition was sweet-talking again: "Europe, democracy, blah blah blah...", but people did not react to those words as before. There were calls to find out who was in charge of them. But there was no leader but the people masses needed to be lead. The AutoMaidan[31] called to picket the Verkhovna Rada, we had agreements according to that subject. The oppositionists were yelling that it was a provocation, but it's too late. Some people picked up and followed that call. We returned to the KSCA, we needed to prepare for the assault.

We quickly pulled our armors, protective glasses and took shields, everything that was being prepared for a month. Backpacks with fireworks and "Molotov cocktails" in them, those couldn’t be exposed that time. Therefore, the bottle was taken; everything was poured into it in the correct proportion and clogged. The matches were attached to the bottle. It turned into a great "Molotov" – it did not stink by gasoline, it could be hidden, it did not spill anything, and it burned perfectly. We line out in front of the KSCA building. We had about 70 men. The Right Sector had already moved forward. We began to move. All of us looked dangerously. You could tell we were prepared not to sing hymns and dance. Proponents of peaceful protests were trying to prevent, and shouted "provocateurs," but

we could not be stopped. We push them out, who was especially violent those got a hit into their heads. In any case, it's decided to go to the assault. We had already known that Hrushevska Street was being blocked by the Berkut and internal military forces. There were many of them – we were few. It didn’t matter, we wanted to break through at any cost – to lie down there, but to show that we were not afraid, to take revenge on that hated regime for the years of persecution, brutalities in the police departments, for our fellows who were in the prisons.

When we came closer to the police cordon, it's hard to push through the crowd. We, like a cruiser, pushed it all. Before our eyes there were no barriers, in reality, there were many of them: the party members yelling that "it’s not time yet," police agents, thugs, inciting agents beckoning that we had to retreat, that we could not win, but tomorrow someone would bring weapons to us. Also, there were guardsmen of politicians, defending their wretched masters and Samooborona[32], always looking after the order. But we did not see any of these anymore. There was the building of Verkhovna Rada and the lines of the regime dogs that hedged it from us.

The first skirmish began. The Right Sector on the left flank tried to break through the cordon of police. We were in the center. There were beautiful moments of the battle. We ripped off helmets from internal military forces, but we couldn’t break through. You were surrounded by the "oppositionists" who pulled you back, but you would still rushing ahead, trying to put the maximum of mutilation to cop in front of you. We retreated a little bit. Klitschko appeared, waving his hands, encouraged everyone to go to the Maidan. Someone pulled out a fire extinguisher, and that scarecrow, now being white, yelled and finally retreated away. We pushed the police cordon behind the bus. We were looking for the keys and trying to start the bus. Not finding keys we released the handbrake and tried to push the bus through the police lines. The members of political party Udar tried to protect police, but we drove it on them as well. Those who were not with us, considered against us. People masses watched the power in action so politicians’ appeals did not work anymore and we ruled the situation.

It is called to intercept the initiative. The Opposition spent a lot of money on the event, but a small group of people, under certain

circumstances and inclinations, could turn the protest into they needed direction.

Grenades fly at us. Not very pleasant – the gas did breathing hard. We're retreating. We understood that we lack manpower. First 'cocktails' were thrown. We tried to set fire the bus near the stadium. A few poor fellows parked their cars there in the morning, and thus involuntarily helped to the revolution. At that time, Yatsenyuk came. He yelled that everyone should go to the Maidan, but even ordinary people send him to the hell.

Night, but was bright as it is a day. The bus in fires. The rebels, covered by shields, were approaching the police cordons. Grenades broke – a gas cloud. We heard rhythmic knocking in the barrels. The Berkut used rubber bullets to shoot, but if it hit the eye, the consequences would be sad. The rupture of the grenade underfoot, someone yelled, blood, and doctors pulled the wounded. I did not have time to get away from gas. I felt sick. I went aside, washed my face with water and lemon. Then I climb up to the hill. I could see the whole view of the battlefield. The center of Kyiv was in flames. We were storming the Rada (Parliament Building) with our guys, people were now with us. Everything we were living past years in front you – the spirit of freedom, the taste of battle. It was worth living for those moments. And we did all that.

Time flew imperceptibly. You don't want to drink or eat. You are fighting. One group was changing another. It was necessary to pressure the enemy, not to let them rest. The constant rotation of fighters hid our real quantity; the enemy should not understand that there were no many of us. Ordinary people also joined the war. An elder man threw a cocktail at the cops, the 16-teen years boys were sneaking to the column and from there trying to hit the cobblestone into the helmet, the doctors took the wounded away, and someone just drummed into the barrel. The front line was expanding; the central buses were already on fire. We were mostly on the left flank, closer to the stadium. Right there, the cocktails were poured; no need to hide them anymore. We were trying to make a breakthrough firing Molotov cocktails. It failed. But sometimes a successfully thrown bottle set several Berkut men on fire. They were panicking, and you could use that chance to choose a more convenient position to throw the cocktails. But everything was not so that simple. From their side, they also threw Molotov

cocktails, bricks and grenades. Especially hurting to us was their shotguns, because it was the easiest way for them to hit the target.

Unexpectedly, the Berkut made a counterattack. Their group broke into our lines, tried to push back on us and pull out some of our people. But no luck for them today. We fought back, broke their lines, and now they trying to escape. They left their friends, and disorderly retreated back to their positions. We beat pretty hard a few of them, and one was in captivity. Then some men from the Opposition appeared again. They intended to take him away from us, and they said that they would take him to the Maidan. They did so later, they took captured Berkut men to the Maidan, and they changed their clothes and returned them to the Berkut. That man was not lucky, while he was dragged out, he got beaten. He’s being taken to the ambulance. But some man ran there and added few more punches to his nose. The ambulance door closes. Through the glass, you could see the weeping faces of the creature, all covered in snot and tears, and just a minute ago, he proudly waved his stick.

We understood that the main enemy was not the Berkut officers or another government forces. But they were the people who made their choice to openly hate us, Ukraine, and everything connected with it. So, no compassion for them.

Closer to the morning everyone was tired. We stood firm on the positions, but the forces were not unlimited. With a new day the number of those who wanted to fight increased, it became a little easier. It becomes possible to go take a rest for a couple of hours. People already enjoyed the battle themselves, threw stones, pour Molotov cocktails. The Maidan square itself was almost empty. Nobody was interested in listening to the nonsense speeches of politicians from Opposition. Now the process was governed by the people. Now it was easier to communicate with people – they listened to your words. Some agreed that the state could be governed by the people themselves, and not by the worthless characters in the cabinets. The paternally used "fascists" disappeared.

There were no more stupid casseroles and squirrels with bunnies on their heads. Everyone wore helmets – a building or a military type. Some wore motorcycle helmets. It is really people’s revolt. It's ridiculous to listen to Russian news, where they talked about armed NATO mercenaries. Though, they could talk about the Berkut. Those were equipped and armed

for sure. But we used a folk art. Road signs instead of flak jackets – they kept rubber bullets perfectly. Petards were used instead of sound flash grenades and fireworks – instead of shotguns.

The battle went on continuously. They adjusted to our tactics. They were keeping a decent distance. They started to use water cannons. We were trying to use the entrance arch of the Lobanovsky Stadium. There was a tree on which you could get to the top of the entrance arch and from there to have a convenient position to throw cocktails. A few people gathered, we equipped them with everything which was necessary. We distracted the Berkut with a fake attack. And then a surprise – the Molotov cocktails were flying from the archway. Many cocktails, this position offered an easy aiming, distance not a problem anymore. The cops were burning. We pressed them.

But maneuvers are the most important part of the war. Rejoicing in success, we missed how they got to the arch. Our guys there also did not see that the cops were coming in a few meters. A fight started. Some tried to climb down a tree, some fell and broke up. Several guys were taken as prisoners. After a couple of hours of torture and bullying, they were released... naked, in the frost.

The distance increased to the cops way too far to get into them. And then someone got the idea to build a catapult. The 21 st century... but for us, that weapon was damned effective – we would be able to reach the enemy at a greater distance. The Berkut were panic – they did not have protection from such weapons. Although, as it turned out later, they had...

They made an attempt to assault at the moment when there were not many organized people on our side and went for a breakthrough. They managed to break through the first barricade and reach the European Square. There for the first time they started using military weapons, several Maidan activists died from the gunshot wounds. We did not start shooting – they set the tone for that confrontation. On alarm, the RS and the Narnia came. Counterattack. Burning tires were as a cover from projectiles. And the Berkut pigs returned to their positions. Some had injuries made with knives and traumatic handguns. An APS appeared on the positions of the Berkut.

The confrontation was escalating and getting tougher. The cops kidnapped our guys from hospitals, tortured them, some of them were

brutally murdered. One day a guy from our group was wounded in the eye. We took him to the hospital, but at night we were informed that he will be kidnapped. We, just a couple of people, borrowed someone's traumatic handgun and rushed to the hospital. We made our way through the security post, we found the room, the guy was shortly after anesthesia, but we took him away anyways. We did not have time to drive off, as the Berkut came into the hospital. But we left through the back streets. It is impossible for him to stay in KSCA, we decided to send him home. We ask the AutoMaidan members to drive him to the bus station. They did not transport him directly at the station – we arrived on foot. We tried not to draw the attention; the hand in the pocket squeezed the gun. I sent him away. The cops were looking at me, but they did not dare to come. I got into the car; the gun was on safety latch. That guy, by the way, was from Mariupol; he returned a couple of days later and said that he could not stay sick home when such events were happening.

It became clear that the jokes ended, and the fight will be to the death. We did not have any weapons, but no one was going to die without a fight. The sticks were replaced with metal rods, icebreakers, axes. We were trying to find traumatic or at least gas pistols. Fortunately, there was such a thing as Zoraki. It’s a traumatic gun, with automatic shooting, which was in service with the Turkish police. In Ukraine, it was already used as a gas gun, but by simple manipulation, it could easy used to shoot with rubber, and if you really want, it could also be used with ammunition. The cellars of the KSCA were turning into a weapons factory. We took everything that could shoot down there. We put metal bearings in the traumatic cartridges instead of rubber, gunpowder was also supplied. It was not very effective and even very unsafe, but in the short distances, there was a chance to hit the enemy. In the surrounding villages, we looked for hunting rifles, we managed to collect a few, but it's better than nothing. To replace the guns we used two metal tubes with handles. In one of them, there was a carnation, which acted as a striker. With a sharp reduction of the tubes, a shot was fired. It's not very accurate and practical, but if you would charge it with buckshot, it's quite effective. We adopted the practice of the Berkut and dragged the bearings to the firecrackers if there was enough gunpowder, it turned out to be a proper grenade, I'd better not comment a safety side. We did not have more modern weapons. Afghans said that they

had an AK assault rifles and all that was needed, but they did not give the weapon to us and did not use it themselves.

And when the confrontation came to its peak, the Opposition appeared again. Priests climbed between the Berkut and us. The battle stopped, the Opposition went to negotiations. For me, it was shocking. What kind of negotiations? With whom? And who get an authority to negotiate? People who had not participated in any battle? Sissies, who called everyone to the Maidan to just sing the national anthem? But people could not live in tension for a long time, they looked for peaceful ways, and they were being led to that on. The fighting was suspended.

What they agreed about – it's not clear. Yatsenyuk – to be a future Premier-Minister, Klitschko – to become a Speaker of the parliament – it did not matter for us. For us, Yatsenyuk, Klitschko, Poroshenko were the same enemies as Yanukovych. They were parts of the system that was necessary to be destroyed.

Periodically there were skirmishes on Hrushevska Street, but they did not last long. The government force wing was plotting something.

It turned out that they were planning an assault, but not on the forehead. Government troops began to draw near the Ukrainian House. Activists of the Maidan surrounded the building. Government troops were resisting, I was poured with ice water. I was frozen, but I did not pay attention to it. And only when there were enough men to assault, Parubiy appeared. He began to tell tales like the Government troops would give up; they would give us ammunition and go home ... I did not believe it, and it never happened. Pigs left the building through the back door, taking the entire inventory with them. Although in a hurry they forgot to take the cartridge from AK assault rifles and Dragunov sniper rifles. Actually, we found the rifle itself, but the Opposition handed it over for the examinations to the cops. It's very funny – to give back the cop’s weapons, from which they had shot at us, to them for examination. Activists occupied that building; we found there some real combat grenades.

It's hard to wean people away from humanism. They still seeing in the Berkut just policemen, trying to help them, allowed them to go when captured. But it was a war if you not kill – they would kill you.

The next day, civil group Spilna Sprava[33] asked for assistance in seizing the Ministry of Energy. We successfully stormed it. The finds there were surprising. I did not really know what that Ministry should do, but there were collections of expensive cognacs, champagne, lingerie and some rubber toys. Though, it could be very necessary for work. It turned out that the organization Spilna Sprava simply used us – they had their own goal. And we can't leave it like this. When we found out it – we stormed the base of the Spilna Sprava, they got their lumps, and we did not cooperate with them any longer.

There were no active fights yet. The Anti-Maidan and[34] the 7th police department were being activated. We made a couple of sorties to the Mariyinsky Park. It was interesting to know who those ideological Anti-Maidans were. It turned out that those were athletes from the Oplot[35] Kharkiv organization, "servants" of all kinds, on the team was taken to Kiev, and trash from Donetsk and the surrounding territories. We were trying to communicate with some, but we did not hear intelligible things, except for "Russia," "Bendery," "Yanukovych," "NATO." They were just drunken animals. A lot of criminals from Gorlovka and Enakieve regions came to "restore order." Although according to the criminal's codes, just being near the cops – was an unacceptable degradation. But not for them – they had no code, neither understanding of what was happening there. I was surprised with separate groups of people who were the Russians, they kept to the side, and they did not want to contact. Then it surprised me – now everything makes sense.

At night, we hunted for anti-Maidan members, and they were hunting for us. Who was lucky would survive this hunt. Skirmishes were very tough. It was more than a fist fight, and they and we had killed people and captured prisoners. The 7th police department was infiltrated and searched the Maidan. But three of their colleagues were not lucky – they were recognized, and they came to our hands. There was a lot of yelling and complaining about this, "Torture! A-ah! Inhuman! It is impossible!" And all was in such sense. But those, who shouted it, probably, did not know what such people were doing. Even before the revolution, they abducted activists, tortured and killed them. During the Maidan, they did the same, and around the KSCA they were walking not as to salute us. It was their work. In the

basement they were interrogated, we learned much interesting and even that the Ministry of Internal Affairs equipped the Anti-Maidan members from their warehouses, that the Berkut had firearms and that there were plenty of our Russian “brothers” who sometimes coordinated the actions of the government forces. They were interrogated so-so; we were much more strongly beaten in the police departments during detentions in the past. They stayed a couple of days, and then the politicians agreed for them to be returned and released. The cops and Anti-Maidan members were often captured in the basement. I would not say that they had been treated gently. At that time, there were already a lot of dead people on our side, and everybody saw the atrocities of the Berkut. They beat, they often beat hard. But that was a cinematic method of obtaining information. There were many others, not such cruel, but more effective ways. The drugs were used as it is correctly called, a psychological effect. Undress the person, plug his ears with cotton wool, tie his eyes, pinch his nose, wrap everything with scotch, up to the very tips of his fingers, and in a couple of days he would tell you everything himself.

At this time, attempts to seize local government administrations in the regions were being made. I did not remember whether they went successfully or failed. I knew that in my city the attempts to disperse the protests were made. They succeeded, but the guys who did not go to Kiev came up and restored everything. The attempts to storm were unsuccessful, but the cops and anti-Maidan members got their lumps. The authorities used all of their resources, created many organizations to call "for order," but they could not suppress the insurrection. The administration just handed over. The first floor was seized by the revolutionaries.

The Maidan continued to live his life. There were no cops, but there were law and order. There were almost no thefts, alcohol was forbidden, for the actions you had done it was necessary to be accountable, and people had to think before making a fool. New forms of self-organization were created. People learned to manage their own lives. We lived in anticipation of the assault, every day there were rumors about the introduction of martial law that the army would join the dispersal of the Maidan, but it did not frighten anybody. We were promised amnesty if we leave. But no one was going to leave. What amnesty? We were in our country. We had the right to decide how to live, keep the amnesty for yourself – it might be useful to you. We

were very angry about opened cafes on the Maidan. All those expensive establishments and creatures visited them. Local elites made wealth on the blood of the nation, sat there, enjoyed a cappuccino, took the photos and watched as the "cattle" was dying. As they said, they liked the atmosphere; some even went out and threw cobblestone in the direction of the police, while filming the video and telling how patriotic they were. Those elites led to such bloody events. You could blame the government – they were guilty, but those middle-class businessmen were responsible as much. They were the executors of orders, and they were the ones who ripped off people, they hired and recruited trash to anti-Maidan members. The entire stratum of so-called businessmen was evil, parasites that cashed in on the grief of the people. But the people had not yet realized that fact; it would be a long time before people realized that there was no honest business.

From time to time, we were visited by provocateurs from the organization “For Clean Kyiv.” They came in crowds, on the pretext that they were not against the Maidan, but they did not like barricades. The Maidan reacted quite liberally – people were lining up and simply did not let them come into the territory. But once it got us. Activists with George ribbons came, who clearly did not have any intentions about clean streets in the city. Wanted a bloody picture? Delivered and stamped! The Narnia could not stand it and flipped that rally upside down. Together with the video operators, they were running up to Besarabska Square and further, spitting out their teeth along the way. They had no more desire to provoke us.

We started frequent skirmishes outside the territory of the Maidan. Cops went to our homes, and we went to their homes. They could no longer feel safe anywhere. Not only in Kyiv, but also in the regions, attacks on policemen had increased. The more they beat us, the more terrible answer we returned. Not a single one of their actions left unpunished. An activist was killed in Kyiv – get a cut cop in Kherson, L’viv, and Odesa. Anti-Maidan members where given the database of activists home addresses – we found their houses ourselves. Blood for blood.

And the Opposition at the same time was negotiating with the authorities. To be honest, we did not take them seriously at that time, it seemed to us that by overthrowing that power, the next one could be changed immediately as well, but nothing was more permanent than

temporary. We did not calculate all the cunning of those people. The Svoboda party agreed to deliver up the KSCA under the pretext of the liberation of Maidan activists. Someone was released, but not all captives. We started to get conflicts with the Svoboda members. We were helped by the Vikings and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. KSCA remained under our control; cops who arrived there received gratitude in the form of being beaten with the armature. The Svoboda called everyone to be provocateurs and tried to evict. Mykhalchyshyn[36] came with his guards, holding a traumatic gun, but more lethal weapons were shown to him, and he left. We kept KSCA, but we moved to the Ukrainian House – it was more convenient to go to Hrushevska Street from there.

During one of the walks, I saw something going on near KSCA, I wanted to come to see what is going on. When I came up, and I was being ripped off by the whole unit of Samooborona Organization. They first beat me heavily and then started to ask. It turned out that they did not wait there for me but someone else, they beguiled. They have apologized. It's was nice of them but still hurt. My nose was smashed, the hematoma was on the arm of, and dissection was on the head is. On my own skin, I realized that the armature was much more effective than baseball bats. In six months it would turn out that in the crowd there were my future fellow soldiers, a pleasant first meeting.

The Maidan stood, but it could not go on forever. Here, so it seemed to me, the authorities had not played a significant role. Everything was coordinated by the Opposition. Regions did not obey the current government, but they did not want to listen to the new government either. It was announced a peaceful march to the Verkhovna Rada building. There was a session at that time where changes to the Constitution were planned to pass. For the people, it did not mean anything good, but it was presented as a universal good. Even to the fool, it was clear that manifestation won’t be peaceful. But still, people came from the regions and were trusted and followed to calls not to take weapons like the Samooborona members would ensure their safety. The Right Sector, the Narnia and the rest of the rebels were preparing for a completely different scenario. But the problem was that there were not so many those who were armed, organized and ready to fight to the end. Yes, those groups could hold Hrushevska Street, or

Instytutska Street, but separately. When the front stretched for the entire government quarter – the power of the insurgents was close to zero.

The Right Sector, UNA-UNSO, the Vikings remained to defense Hrushevska Street. The Narnia separated into small groups and spread out. We moved to Instytutska Street. At first, everything was normal. People were moving in columns and singing songs. Who was in the Mariyinsky Park, who was near the Rada. The numbers of security officials were very large. They were everywhere. You just were going along Instytutska Street, and the Berkut was on the left and straight ahead, also next to the President's Administration there were a countless number of buses with government forces. Just behind the Berkut and internal military forces were anti-Maidans, but those were not just drunks. There were organized groups; they had bandages, helmets, baseball bats, some adorned with their weapons. From the tactics point of view, going to the Mariyinsky Park was a suicide. If a fight began, the flanks would be isolated immediately, and you would be circled in. Our group went a little further than the Administration, but we did not go further into the depths. Oh yes, before the security officials, for some reason, the units of PP Svoboda were lined up, as always, it was not clear whom they supported.

I did not know how it started. In the course of the given command cops went to storm. Grenades flew in us at once. The cops stood behind the trucks, it was almost impossible to get into them. We began to search for stones, cast them there, but there was almost no effect. The units of Svoboda left immediately. People weren't organized, and there was no real resistance. The Berkut quickly began to push everyone back. We set fire to their KamAZ trucks, started turning over cars to somehow delay their offensive. There was no cordon clear battle line any longer, only maneuvers – either they advance, or we did. Forces, of course, were unequal. The Berkut and internal military units were at least somehow prepared and organized, they had commanders. From our side there were small organized groups and many people who tried to fight without being organized in structure, there were heroic acts in the fight, but their organization was superior to our quality.

We tried to throw cocktails, but it did not give the proper effect. Open space, it's easy to hide from fire. On the other hand, shotguns were actively used, and by the way, people fell nearby, it was clear that the bullets were

not rubbered any longer. They used a new type of grenades – a strong gap, a lot of gas. And some grenades with the rubber balls especially tore very hard, causing terrible injuries. We also had weapons on our side. We used traumatic guns, but there were only a few of them. We used homemade shotguns. On the other side already some dead. Their attack – we retreated. We started a sharp counterattack. And part of the Berkut was cut off. We did not stand on ceremony with them anymore; they were beaten, while I tried to get the shields and the helmet. Humanists were trying to save the Berkut. At that moment you come closer to them like you want to help bring wounded Berkut to the medical center. He looked at you thinking, the salvation is finally there for him, and you hit him. Once, twice, three... drop him down and walking away.

The rumors spread that the government forces were already in the KSCA. We went there. We were combing the building – no one was there. They said that they had just left. Someone was trying to set fire to the KSCA. The gate was burning. Wounded fellow brothers were coming. There was almost no armor. The defensive position in Hrushevska Street was broken. The Ukrainian House, the Zhovtnevy palace were captured. All resistance was now only on the Maidan. The shout called that everyone should leave the center of the city, that now the Anti-terrorist operation shall begin.

Damned fights with the Berkut while the song was on: "Ole-ola, today we are to be f*cked, we will be imprisoned, imprisoned, and imprisoned forever." Afghans, with their vaunted arms, left the Maidan. It was not clear what to do. We were going to the House of Trade Unions. There were all ours. We understood that the Maidan was lost, in its present position. The forms of struggle had to be changed, and the geography had to expand. We needed more weapons, to stretch police units around the city so that it would not be easy for them to cope with us.

It's already night, the tires were burning, cocktails were flying, grenade rips and shots were everywhere. We decided to leave the place. The guys were going to leave tomorrow. Strangely enough, but the only one who was ready to help us was the guy from the leftist movement. To leave was not so simple, anti-Maidans were searching the whole city, and they had automatic weapons. But somehow we got to the place. I had slept a couple of hours, in the morning I took guys on a bus. I returned to the

Maidan. Everything was black with soot, the Berkut was close, water cannons were watering all over, but people were fighting steadily, more and more new activists were coming up.

In L'viv, people seized the administration, the Security Service, the Interior Ministry. In Frankivs'k was the same situation. People had hundreds of barrels in their hands. In Kiev, warehouses were reinforced with military units. All entrances to the city were closed, trains were not allowed.

I stayed there until the evening. Fighting continued. In the evening I was going to my city. There was also a lot of going on. The guys were going to bring down the monument to Lenin. The cops were throughout the city. The regime desperately tried to restrain itself. I hid in my friend's place. We talked about the situation. The cops were going after us. There were narks near each home. Also, our main people were rumored to be killed. We went home to a friend of mine – where we noticed the strange people hanging around. We went quickly into the house, it was clear that we could not be there anymore. We called a person; he drove to us on his minibus. The cops did not cause any suspicion, we quickly got in. We left. The car started to drive behind us, but we were lucky to make a gate-away.

I understood it was time to leave. I shaved my beard. It turned out that we hid in a house where the second roommate was a cop. While he was at work, we made photos while wearing his uniform overcoat. We decided to go to another city, there to get on the train, and join our group, which tried to get the weapons. Then we returned to Kyiv again. It was the decisive day. The Berkut retreated, internal military units in panic capitulated. Automatic guns fire went on. People from the Opposition allowed vehicles with weapons to drive into the government district. There was an order to go up along Instytutska Street. We did not go there – it was incomprehensible for us why. There were people, they had weapons, they shot, but the Opposition simply called to go there. In a couple of minutes, it became clear why. They started to fire, and people fell everywhere. The shooting was completely chaotic. Even people standing on the Maidan and not threatening security forces were falling down hit by bullets. And then – silence. The firing ended. Blood, dead, everyone around was screaming, moaning, crying, sirens.

We left. A few days I just did nothing, then I got in touch with people, deciding what to do, how to further advance the revolution. But, having read the news, I understood that it was the end. Everyone yelled about the victory, provisional governments were elected. Everyone was delighted with the release of Timoshenko. Such a joy! Even under our rule, she had to be in prison. The real political prisoners were forgotten.

The opposition had outplayed everyone. The government district was occupied by Samooborona. It seemed to me that previous authorities had nothing to do with the firing, they didn't need it. But to the new government, it was playing into the hands. The Maidan was going out of control, people were armed, people were ready to overthrow power everywhere, and it was not the fact that those politicians would give the orders. But shooting a hundred unarmed people put everyone in a stupor: a bloody tyrant, hundred of death during an hour. And now saviors declared what people wanted to hear, that there would be no more blood, that it was a victory. There were a few days for the most riotous ones for robbery, security officials were practically nowhere to be found, and those who were, also were afraid even to stick their heads out.

The new government had forgotten about all political prisoners, but the threat of storming the Rada helped to free our imprisoned guys from the Organization. They did not relax at will, but they began to form a new structure.

By and large, it was not a revolution, it was just a coup. One of the pro-government groups changed the other, but in a very cruel and bloody way. We, the people, had a chance of making the real revolution, but we missed it. We did not push more where we had to, we did not create our own alternative structure, we let all the same scumbags to rule the country, and they were even more cunning, stiffer and smarter than their predecessors.

I used to envy those who had died during those days. Death is scary. But they died at a time when they felt like people, in those rare moments when there was freedom around when there were dreams, and they seemed to be so close. They died for a right thing and don't see what is going on now. It is our duty to finish the Revolution.

RIGHT SECTOR “THE NORTH”

Except you can't escape into daydreams for good,
The fun doesn't last long, so much pain is around us.
Try to pry open the hands of the fallen
And accept the weapon from work-weary hands.

Ballad of Strife

I have returned to my city. The guys had already formed a local cell of the Right Sector Organization. The RS, at that time, was a very fuzzy structure. Everyone called themselves to be the RS. It made things easier for us – part of the guys stayed in the city, and they began to gather right-wing youth near them. Another part of the people returned from the Maidan. And so it turned out to be called The Right Sector North. From the very beginning, it was a very large organization. All the so-called right-wing party joined us, except for Samooborona, but there were not many people in there. Even apolitical soccer fun clubs imbued with the Revolution, but then it turned out that it was only for personal purposes. What we immediately did not like – then curator was sent to us. We knew that man, he was from our city, but we had not known him before very well.

From the very first days, we had fights with the liberal movements. They proclaimed themselves to be Council of Maidan, they allowed an incomprehensible person to join them and began to bargain for seats in the new government. Our curator was leaning towards them, talking about political image, but we held our line. They could not force us, but they could do meanness. At first, they did not want to give a place in the administration, not literally a place, but a space for office where we could gather together. The argument was quite simple – during the Revolution, we were in Kiev, and therefore we had to look for a place there. But who at that time could forbid something to us? One of them tried to occupy our room, came and settles down with a laptop and that’s it. We came, asked him to leave, he did not want to. We used force, he called cops, they in their turn said: "Decide yourselves." Since then, the office was ours. That was a kind of a reception room; people went there to join us and to complain. The second thing was done much more often. A neighbor complained about his or her neighbor, an elderly woman asked to burn another elderly person shed, someone had roof leaks. In general, all professional pylons came to us. We listened to them, made a serious appearance and said to come later. It was no sense to help people who could not help themselves.

The organization grew rapidly. Any kind of actions attracted many people, all were imbued with the spirit of patriotism, on every corner was

heard “Glory to Ukraine,” a couple of years ago we even could not dream of it. The former government representatives instantly flipped their faces, with attached yellow-blue ribbons and claimed they were not against Maidan, but for the order. The filthiest disappeared for some time.

There were almost no government power representatives in the city, or rather they were, but no one listened or respected to them. All disputed issues were resolved with the help of us. We, in our turn, began to build order based on our views. At the official level, the law on the prohibition of the sale of alcohol after 10 pm was promoted. And at the unofficial – we made the city calm and safe for walks at night. I did not know what the cops had been doing all those years, but it turned out that it didn’t take us more than a month to calm down the most violent persons. An indicative place was the grocery supermarket in the center of the city – it's a shop where you could buy alcohol and cigarettes. There were 2 nightclubs nearby, and all the muck from there, to save money, went to that store. Immediately they drank and behave disgustingly. We raided there by a minibus and explained them in a very clear form that they could not do it. After a dozen of such trips that place had become a showpiece: purity, order, and silence.

We got the walkie-talkies. We adjusted them for all frequencies – from police to fire. Now we were aware of all that was happening. Cops were given call pseudo– Akab-1, Akab-2, etc. there were very funny conversations:

– Akab-1 to Right (RS unit).

– Right is here.

– We have a fight here. Help us.

– No, Akab-1, you help yourselves. You are the cops.

Particularly funny when you knew that those conversations were recorded and sent to their superiors in Kiev.

We were inexperienced in the matter of post-revolutionary state construction, and therefore we did not do what we should. Instead of taking government positions, we began to do micromanagement of necessary and useful things in the city, but those things could wait. For example, the gambling business. It disgusted us since pre-Maidan times. We destroyed their offices, one or two per month, which it did not give the result. There was another approach. During one night, we closed the 3-5 illegal casinos in a way that the desire to open was lost. After several raids, we got

contacted by big men. They suggested to give us money so that their gambling places would not be touched, but only their competitor's casinos would be raided. But we did not become covers. After we had received money from them, at the same night all the gambling machines were broken. We used this approach often. Raggers carried money to be protected from us, we took money – well, we needed to earn something – but they were punished anyway. For them, it was not making any sense. It seemed that the money was given, everything should be fine – it’s been working with cops for many years like this. But we were not cops, if something were not right, not fair – we would fight it.

Local criminal gangs understood the thing. They also did not participate in the anti-Maidan, but they were not Maidan supporters neither. They sent people to us, like normal guys who loved Ukraine and all that. We somehow did not get to the heart of the matter. We began to be friends with them. It seemed that we were together on the one hand, but we were not on the other hand. First, no one paid any attention to it, people were needed, and there was no breeding at all. Then, under the guise of our name, those people were engaged in ordinary banditry.

We found the place for our headquarters. We organized it. Everything in the spirit of the Revolution: gunsmith, hall, warehouse. We spent there many evenings. We were talking about the Revolution, plans for the future, planning of operations. A wonderful team gathered. Yes, there were lousy sheep, but mostly – the best people. The fate, however, was different for everyone: some end up in prison, some on the run, someone became a cop (in the true sense of the word).

In parallel, our beautiful half launched the project the “Gdoche” (the Waiting) (Women's Voluntary Association of Che). They worked on social issues, with children, in general, all those useful things, which we ignored because of our militancy. Some actions were shared and held together. So people can see us from the better side.

There were a lot of mass events at that time – from auto rallies to embroidery parades. It seemed to us that a feeling of patriotism awoke in people. That everyone suddenly realized who they were. They loved their homeland, language, and culture. They were proud of being Ukrainians. But it was superficial, most simply turned to fashion. It was such a half-year of fashionable Ukrainian culture. People did not want to understand the state

functioning matters and the National problems, for which they would pay very soon. We were no better than others. Instead of creating our own institutions of power, alternative councils, promoting our people, we were engaged in "control" of the authorities, for which we paid later.

In the city, they were trying to appoint a new chief of the regional police. He was from Kharkiv, and he was seen in connections with the Oplot organization. We were picketing the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Everything in the spirit of the Maidan: camouflage, bullet-proof vests, balaclava, burned tires, baseball bats, smoke grenades, attempted assault, a fight with cops. He would be appointed anyway, but he would reckon with us the whole his service.

The first soccer game since the Revolution. We were no longer on the blacklist – there were no such lists. Before entering the stadium, the police chief asked us not to take weapons to the stands. And where would we put it? He suggested during the time of the game to give us the keys to the police car. We agreed. We unload everything into the trunk. After a couple of minutes, it was just filled with knives, brass knuckles, bottles, chains, and hammers. In the eyes of the cops, we could read, "Guys, thank you, that we are alive."

Time passed. It was the most beautiful and romantic post-revolutionary time. We had dreams, feats, plans... But not everything was so simple. Then the troubles began in the East part of the country and in Crimea.

The new government did not react to the events in Crimea at all, and we did not understand what to do. Russia started to play first against us, and they won. The operation of the annexation of Crimea was technologically and beautifully executed. The Arab spring was not to be compared with it.

Immediately the East of Ukraine was activated. The resource freed from the Crimea was transferred to mainland Ukraine. First, they tried to play the Maidan-like there. It seemed like a peaceful protest: "We are for federalization." But it was so unnatural. The men that could not say a pair of words suddenly learned what federalization meant.

Anti-Ukrainian movements were raised in all cities. Our city was not an exception. Trial rallies near the administration buildings, but they saw that we were ready to fight back. There were the first anti-Ukrainian graffiti in the city, strange people. Organizations like Afghan veterans dedicated to

destroying the RS were activated. But they, seeing that the situation was shaky, held more to our side.

We started patrolling, checkpoints on the roadways leading to the city. At one night from such post information arrived that towards the Russia border the trucks in the column were driving from the city. We rushed there, we drove to the border. Before the custom controls, there was a parking place. There were 53 new KamAZ trucks. We block all of them. It turned out that those were Yanukovych's son trucks, which they wanted to transport to Russia.

We blocked them but what to do next? We decided to return all that to the city. We called the whole team. It turned out that not everyone knows to drive a vehicle, and between those who had a driver license, only a few people could drive KamAZ trucks. It did not matter – we got into the trucks and drove. That unforgettable sight was the convoys of KamAZ trucks full cabin of companions, stretching for several kilometers. We're driving, we're joking. On speed arrived into the city. The traffic police post. They tried to stop the convoy. For the sake of laughter, we stopped. The traffic cop looked into the cab, five people wearing balaclavas smiled at him from there.

– Hello, your doc... And who are you?

– The Right Sector.

– And what about these KamAZ trucks?

– Took from Yanukovych (fled president).

– Ah, well, have a good journey.

We hid KamAZ trucks in the parking lot, but not all in one place. Since the morning, we were surrounded by the police. The CEO of the company paid them, and now they wanted to take all that to return the trucks to him. We said that trucks would not be returned, but we would drive them all to the central square so that people could look at them. Cops blocked us with cars and threatened to storm. But there in their walkie-talkie they heard their chief. It turned out that they miscalculated. Some of the trucks were hidden in a different place, and the guys had already driven them to the central square, there was no more reason to block us. A couple of weeks the whole city admired new KamAZ trucks in the square. Then our curator made a blunder, and all those trucks were given to the company back to the KamAZ trucks Center, although we wanted to give them to the

army. There were rumors that at the beginning of the ATO separatists drove those trucks.

The situation in the East was difficult. The first seizures of the Security Service buildings and the police were carried out. It’s hardly could be called captions, mostly rotten cops gave their weapons up. The slogans about federalization were changed by appeals "Russia, Russia, Russia." The "volunteer fighters" from the Russian Rostov region numerously were coming to Ukraine, the enemy army forces grouped near the border.

We stopped any attempts to shake the internal situation. Those were rather vicious and inhumane methods, but such was the time. We drove to the people trying to shake situation and change for federalization. After, they did not want to go to Russia anymore.

May holidays[37] were coming. The whole city was waiting for provocations and violent actions. The police were passive and waiting for something. We encountered some cops, who had the flags of Russia in their pockets – it was their way to reinsure themselves if situation change in any way. There was no way someone could rely on them. We took the situation in the city under our control. All administrative buildings and police departments were under our supervision. We were patrolling the city with guns. Everything went calmly. We caught several provocateurs.

The preparation for war has begun. Although at that time we did not think about it seriously. It just seemed that everything would finish. We would go there and disperse Russians and local degenerates. Everything would be all right. But it failed to happen in such way. The organization formed a group to fight against the invaders. We cooperated with them.

We were training, we tried to obtain weapons. When the situation became critical, we understood that was the end of waiting. It made no sense to stay at home. All we could do there, we had already done. Time to move to the East...

THE WAR

Immediately after the events in the Crimea, it became clear that it was not all over. It just couldn't be it! The aggressor who had not been punished would never stop. Therefore, it happened. The events in the Donbas region followed after Crimea unpunished annexation. At that time, my friends and I tried to change something in the post-revolutionary country, we, as small children, believed that we could change everything, that people now understood the essence of power, that they could not be deceived by false slogans and beautiful speeches anymore... It turned out that they did not understand. But we learned about it a little later.

With the first seizures of administrations, it became clear that the authorities did not react in any way; security officials were likely to stay with separatists, and those who were not – were terribly cowardly and could not even defend themselves.

There was a case when on May 9 the police of our city, being afraid of provocations, asked us to guard their weapons armories. We helped, but so far I had been tormented by the feeling that it was necessary to take all weapons, maybe one of our friends would be alive now...

What we had to do in that situation? Where was the army? How to act? There were many questions, but there was only one answer... Stopping it was necessary. For me there was no question of going to war or not, it came of its own. You just woke up and go to work, and we woke up and went to the war...

First, we had questions where to get weapons, how to gather a good company and find a place for celebrations. But even there everything was resolved by itself, some guys began to form a group and trained it. I knew those people well. We had a lot to have done together. I would not delve into our relationship (it used to be different), but I knew that it was possible to go to fight together with them. All had been developed, all questions had disappeared.

At first, there was a drill. It was a basic combat training when for the three days they would make a soldier from you. I arrived at the gathering

site. I did not know people, a new group was forming. What were we going to do? I did not even guess, but such was an order...

Actually, as for me, the event was utterly senseless from the preparations point of view. Except for how to fall face down to the ground with hands behind our back, we did not learn anything, but three days passed very cheerfully. That was the first time when the idea came to my mind: we could not return from the war. There was no sense to describe everything that happened, except for one moment. There I first saw the people with whom I would go through this war. People, who are still very close to me, in which, I see the future of my country. But then they did not seem that way.

In general, all of us have had a very different background; there were bartenders, businessmen, students ... I could not understand what they were doing there... Why would they need all that? Strange, but the closest person in the war for me was Medved'[38]. He was a bartender... A man whose profession I did not understand and did not think it to be necessary, although he proved the opposite. I hadn’t noticed Medved’ immediately, but there was a moment when I realized that we would work together well. They forced us to pray (they had such a specific character within their "fraternal" group)... Everyone was told to kneel... I was not against religion, I did not even argue that once I would believe in something, but as an intelligent person said: "We do not find God, he finds us." At that moment I could not bow before what was not for me... All stood up, and I felt uncomfortable, the war already seemed not to be so close...

But then I saw that I was not alone. Medved’ also went against the system. I felt calmer. The presence of that man was very reassuring during all future events.

At the end of that training, one very famous and respected person spoke to us. The one whose lectures not one generation of revolutionist had read. He spoke a lot, he analyzed the situation. I listened, and something stayed in my memory, although at that time I thought it was an exaggeration. And he said the following, "In this war, we will not be heroes, the best of us will be killed, and the rest will be arrested"... We would either be killed or arrested... It sounded strange. We were going to defend the country! We could die, but why we would be arrested?

Who can arrest people defending their homeland? Now it is not strange any longer, many of us had died, many had been arrested, and maybe others will soon be arrested too... For what? For not being afraid of the enemy, because we can bear arms, for not being silent... There is nothing new in this. On the Maidan we were at first "provocateurs," and later heroes. At the beginning of the war, too, we were heroes at first, and now – "radicals," sometimes even "agents of the Kremlin"...

People need to understand that today's power is completely criminal and corrupt. Well, a man who had been stealing from the budget during past 25 years, running from one party to another, cannot change! He cannot change and does not need or want it. Why would he?

It's time to stop believing in that charming word "reform." It's time to leave the habit of trusting politicians; maybe everybody needs to change their life themselves? Personally, I know many Ukrainian politicians, and according to the personal communication, you can understand that the myth that they are professionals was just a myth created by them. The parliament consists of 90 percent of the businessmen and their friends, who do not understand anything about state policy and can, ordered the bills written by freelance students. Would you ask a person from outside to manage your family? And the state is like a big family. Everything in it is very simple, but there are people for who profited from complicating everything.

The best were selected among us – I did not know under which criteria, but I was lucky to be one of them. Departure was appointed in two days. There were no hesitations or thoughts at all. It was necessary to go, so we had to go. Fear… well, I did not have fear, I didn’t even know what to fear.

We had received the uniforms. I got an old MultiCam, and it did not fit my tall height, but it was better than nothing. My parents did not know where I was. I said that I was training near Kiev. Then that I worked in the police, although they hardly believed it. I told my Dad where I am after the assault, but I did not tell my mother right up to Ilovaisk. My girlfriend knew everything. She certainly did not like this idea, like the Maidan, and indeed the way of my life, but she understood me and supported everything. She even wanted to go to the war, but it was not allowed ... It's always easier when you know that somebody misses you at home, that what you are doing is for someone...

It didn’t happen to me to go with the whole group. I’ve got a call where I was asked to accompany the senior head of the group. I agreed and came to the specified place. There was a black jeep waiting for me, a man to be guarded, two guys and one AK assault rifle :) One rifle to be used by three of us... Strange feeling when in the center of Kyiv you were standing with an AK, and no one paid attention to you at all. People did not care, cops turned away... Can all our troubles be because of us being indifferent? When someone is being robbed – we turned away, someone is raped – we walked to the other sidewalk when didn’t get paid a salary – we do not say anything, they take away part of the country – we just got upset...

So let's go... We left in the evening. All were silent – there was no topic for conversation. The question worried me if to keep AK assault rifle barrel up or down – what was the correct way? I put it on the floor thinking that if something happened – it would be possible to shoot faster.

I did not have to shoot – the trip was without adventures, except that we got lost on the way. Although there was a GPS navigator, the driver said, "My inspiration is the best GPS navigation: we will see the landscapes and put off the track everybody."

THE ASSAULT OF MARIUPOL

The banners in the dirt and crumpled silks,
Field Marshal's dentures and wands.
Ah, glorious regiment!... But was it really glorious,
Consist of only thugs?

In the morning we reached the hotel near the sea. I really liked it: dawn, waves, and seagulls. Last time I saw such a picture when I was studying in the junior school. We had a short rest, ate a bit and drove to the base. The first block-post was on the spit arm. A KrAZ track, bags with sand, guys wearing balaclavas... The base. It was a hotel building, everything was very civil and beautiful, well, except for visitors wore uniforms, had weapons and beards.

The feeling of alarm came after we were told that we were going at night... In fact, no one knew whether he was traveling or not. There was a plan written and layout for assault groups, support groups, etc. but only I did not know that plan. Our group was assembled, inspected and, by an unknown methodology was decided who will obtain the weapons. Who arrived earlier already had a weapon, but it was not enough guns for the newcomers. The method of close inspection they determined who was worthy to get it. At that time I was discovering the base, and so I stayed without a riffle... When I found out that I was staying at the guard, I was very upset. Such a feeling, like when waiting for a gift for the Christmas, then you run to look under the Christmas tree, and there's nothing...

But after 5 minutes I was already armed. Actually, their methodology worked out, and an AK assault rifle went to me from a guy with a less formidable form. My beard determined my future!

It would be nice to be happy, but no... I began to realize that the rifle was given to me for a reason, I would have to fire. My imagination drew horrible pictures of Chechens' and vatnyks'[39] severed hands and feet... A good Samaritan awoke inside me and started looking for someone to whom I could give the rifle, and in my eyes everyone became warriors, and only I was a small boy with an adult toy... But pride took its toll. For some sake of the reason, I came here! How would I look in the eyes of my beloved, my mother, my friends who knew that I went to the war? Having overcome my doubts, I started to pack. Someone gave a helmet, someone – a load carrying tactical vest and I got a Camelback which I later regretted.

We wrapped our arms with colored duct tape. In that procedure there was something terrible, with each skein you understood – there was no turning back. From the side we all looked very dangerous – I thought so, although looking now at those photos, you see children's faces, in whose eyes there was anxiety, misunderstanding of what was happening, but pride for themselves and their friends who would now free the city from the enemies. It's like a movie, a book about mythical heroes. I could not imagine this happening in real life...

Last preparations, taking pictures, jokes about the fact that it was the last photo and waiting for the departure... Waiting is the hardest. You did not want to fight anymore, gloomy thoughts, the desire to leave from there– not everything in your life was that bad, maybe there was no work, maybe the face was not prettier, but at least you lived... But you did not show it, drove it away. The guys around you no longer just your bodies, but battle brothers, for each of which you answered and everyone was responsible for you. At least I thought so. I wanted to talk, but could not call home, I tried to be courageous when spoke with my girlfriend, told her how everything would be fine, although I had no idea how it would be. Then you called a friend and asked to take care of your girlfriend and family if something happened. He calmed you and through the time, before his first fight, he did the same. You are turning off the phone, forming-up, to the vehicles.

We were getting in a KamAZ truck. Uncomfortable, many people, everyone had an armor vest, a load carrying tactical vest, machine guns. I was lucky to take a seat on the bench, but how hard the bench was! And they said that it would take at least an hour to go. One was smoking, the second one screamed that smoke disturbed him, someone was trying to film it on his mobile phone, and we start moving. Not passing even a couple of kilometers, our KamAZ crashes into the car from our convoy and broke. It turned out that the driver had problems with driving.

Everyone jumped out, tried to portray Special Forces, dismantle sectors, but it soon became clear that we stacked there for a long time, so we were dropped down along the road. And then I realized that my Camelback was leaking. I could not patch it, it was a pity to throw it away since it wasn’t mine. I tried to drink water from it, and then I offered it to everyone. As a result: there was no rain, there was no water, but the whole my back and pants were wet. Talks about tactics, fortified areas, with

hordes of enemies began. Everyone was trying to joke, but somehow all that looked nervous. In an hour it became clear that the KamAZ did not drive anywhere, we were waiting for another transport. And... Oh, a miracle! A green school bus was coming for us! The view of that “military” transport relaxed us. We got in and went further.

I had never been to the Donbas before. Looking at the terrain was interesting. There was descend, then ascent, descent again, the checkpoint, military equipment, military personnel. We turned right to the airport. We disembarked and smoked cigarettes. We’re looking at the sides. There were already plenty of people, not only ours. Some were coming to us with greetings. It turned out they were “Dnepr-1” volunteer battalion and the National Guard. Preparations were in progress. The turmoil, everyone was looking for something, dragging and yelling. I noticed the uniforms – they all were different: someone had completely black close, some had a Bundeswehr uniform, and someone was wearing armor over a sports jacket. It looked strange, but there was something in it. People who before had not fought, vaguely imagined themselves the war were going to storm the city... Students, hooligans, engineers, historians, bartenders... While in the country with 300 thousand of cops, with an army, where people for many years and for big money had a Ministry of Defense... At that airport, history created something new and something great was born... I could not convey that atmosphere...

The boxes with grenades were brought in. Everyone tried to grab more, twist the fuses in. In the absence of good pouches, they put it in their pockets. For some reason, I did not want to take those grenades. It seemed to be the right thing, but it did not add confidence. We broke into groups for three. I gave all my grenades to my partners.

We were forming-up and listened to the speech of the battalion commander. His words really caught me. I am not a pagan, but I imagined how my ancestors waited for me in Valhalla, although I did not really want to see them yet. To the battle. All we were running to the transport. Dawn brightening. The cry echoed "To Valhalla!”. A convoy was being formed, and we were going to our first fight...

Bus. It's quiet, there were no more jokes, and everyone understood it's serious now. Someone pushed the cartridge into the chamber, someone fumbles with a fuse. From behind, I heard: "I wrenched my whisker so that

I could throw it faster.» The guy had wrenched it in a full bus! And there were 15 such "wrenches" inside the bus! At that moment the second thought came: "I will not live until the end of the war, – the promised Valhalla is so close. Ancestors put the kettle!"

An empty city... Our convoy was moving towards the place. On the left was the monument to Lenin. Ahead there was a theatre. While then there were no sensations as if we were with classmates on a school trip. The first "Russia," "DNR" graffiti appeared... Part of the convoy stopped, we moved on. Disembarked. Our group did not play the main role. The whole burden of the operation was carried by the stormtroopers. Our task was to cover the main group and then – mopping–up operation the adjacent territories. We took positions at the walls of buildings. It was still quiet, and it was not clear what would happen next. People appeared in the windows. I did not know how to react to them. Were they enemies? Friendly? They showed indecent gestures. Could I shoot? No, they are civilians... Except it was not immediately clear of what state they were citizens of.

We broke into groups for three, taking positions. The first shots were heard, at first one, two, and then the cannonade. It was an unforgettable sound when single-handed shooting passed into the orchestra of shots! Rocket-propelled grenades fired, grenade rips were heard. The wireless transmitter hiccups: "The 300[40] shsh... heavy shshs..." I became uncomfortable, it could not be said that it was fear. A completely new feeling, the throat dried up, in all that noise you could hear was only your own heart beating. The adrenaline caused my left leg to shake. I tried to cope with it – and hoped nobody would notice...

And then a powerful shot was heard. You would even jump up in surprise. Without understanding, I looked around; I tried to understand what it was, where from and who shot it. Shot fired again I saw the truck, all wrapped in the smoke, then remembered, the word ZU-machine[41] – it was a word without any meaning. It produced smoke and noise and destroyed an enemy barricade. Several explosions and unknown ZU-machine became your ZU-machine, and it was not a simple and incomprehensible word anymore, then it hid behind the building. You were trying to watch your sector of fire, although vaguely imagined what had to watch for and in that chaos of war, you saw a man or something very similar to person calmly

coming to you did not listen to the command to stop and did not react to the warning shot. The guys came up, took that walking body, which yelled at them "I need to go to that building... for 5 minutes... to drink more...I am thirsty". The battle was long and such "plumbers" coming more and more. You remembered it’s like from an American zombie movie.

The battle went on... White fabric... Shout "Stop!"... Shot... The whistle of the bullet... A body ran past you and fell into the bushes. And what was that? The commander said to check. Medved and I approached. In the bushes was a man lying on the ground face up wearing a white button-down shirt in blood. We received a command to take him to the doctors. Even we did not know where the medics were, we took the body and carried it into the indicated direction. It was evident that he would not survive several wounds in the chest – someone shoots well. Who was this wounded – we did not know exactly, most likely separatist, trying to escape, well, or someone who was very unlucky today. He breathed intermittently, the rattle was audible, the whole shirt was already in the blood, and with each stroke of the heart, the red spot became larger. He tried to talk, and I thought that he was too heavy and it was very hot outside. We reached the intersection and heard a cry "Stop! There's a sniper working!" And what should we do? We looked at each other with Medved, we looked at the body. Somehow without words, we understood – we would not carry him further, wounded can say "thanks" to his sniper-friend. We put him near a bush. He did not breathe any longer, flies sat on him. I could never understand where they came from so quickly. We left...

We controlled the sector in front of a yard with an iron gate and, as we were told, separatists had to go from there, but they did not go obstinately. The dedication with which we did it was equal to the dedication of fanatics. You stared at the yard through the corner of the metal grating, and you heard all the rustles and creaks, you were afraid to cross the lines and went to the other side of the gate. And at that moment, one of our people came right in the center of the yard (he apparently did not know that the enemy would trample there) stayed and smoked.

Stormtroopers had done a great job. We moved forward to mopping operation. We formed-up a convoy along the street. We passed 100 meters, turned left. There you could see the traces of the stormtroopers' work. There were broken barricades, cartridges, burning BRDM, and smoke, ragged

wires – very beautiful. You stopped for a moment. There was something new, it magnetized you, fascinated you and would never let you go again... The same city, but it looked different, and felt differently...

War is an art; it draws pictures that will forever remain in your memory. We went in the backyards. There were five of us. We went, the weapons were prepared to fire, and everyone was looking after his direction and tried to tell the neighbor that he was doing all wrong. A shot was heard across the backyard. I stopped, I looked around, and there is only Medved from my fellows. Everyone ran to see where the shooting came from. The theory was a theory, and human curiosity had no limit. Fortunately, in that yard, were no enemies. It became clear that I wanted to fight only alongside Medved – at least he won't leave in the middle of the action. We moved ahead. There was a small garden before us. I wanted to go straight on it, but the granny came out and said so boldly that she had strawberries growing there and that we, warriors, would not be happy if something happened to it. We had to walk it around, but we sent two fellows to check her house. Everything was clear. A single shot was heard here and there over the block. We went into houses, people reacted differently: some did not want to let in, some were happy that it would be finished for them. Through a couple of houses, it became clear that people who lead an antisocial way of life did not hold books in their hands, and, whose favorite music was a crime chanson, supported the "Donetsk People Republic" and tried in every possible way to interfere with us. In one of those houses, the property owner screamed and did not let us enter. To be honest, it was unclear to me why we should have been politely communicating with them and not even being rude. We came in, I went down to the basement, and it was dark down there. It seemed there was no one, I was already going to leave, but I heard a rustle. A chest drawer was on the floor. Thinking that it could be a mouse, I looked there anyway. And what was my surprise when I saw a man there, twisted like a snake! We withdrew him, he confessed that he was a separatist and immediately told about his accomplices, whom we removed from the roofs and pulled them out from the cellars. They looked so-so, before that I had visited the pages of "Novorussia"[42] in the Russian social network Vkontakte. Their propaganda described them to be proud fighters for justice, unshakable soldiers, intellectuals changing the world, but in fact,

they were alcoholics and drug addicts, whose ideology was 200 hryvnias per day, well, or a dose. Those guys immediately forgot about the DPR and began to convince that they always loved only Ukraine.

We moved further. We saw a guy with the Ukrainian flag. He ran up to us and said that there were armed people in his basement. We surrounded the basement. It was scary to enter. To begin with, we simply asked whether there was someone there or not. Silence in the answer. We said that we would shoot. Still silence. I shot in the air. Voices were heard. They said that they had weapons, but they did not want to surrender. I explained to them that I would throw a grenade, which I had given away before in the bus. They started throwing their weapons, and then they crawled out themselves. Six people, a new AK assault rifle, a shotgun and a sniper rifle. There was “Batia”[43] among them one of the main separatists in Mariupol city. He said that the curators and the main group with Chechen at the head (the self-proclaimed military commandant of the DPR in Mariupol) left at night. I searched them and found a paper in the pocket, with names and addresses, opposite to each name were a price. Apparently ideological fighters for the "Russian world" received 200 hryvnias per day. I remembered that someone then said, "In vain, we did not threw the grenade there, they will be released free anyways." Now I understood that it was true.

We continued mopping operation, we found them everywhere. Insurgents had weapons, but as a rule, they just gave up and try to prove that they were on our side. We loaded them into the car wagons. It's stupid of course. You cannot act by law with people for whom there is no law. After combing the district, we went to the buses. The operation lasted all day, and everyone was terribly tired. We were leaving as on the road near the monument to Lenin we saw a rally in support of the DPR. But it was too late. There would be no more DPR in Mariupol. Although it was necessary to drive up there, excessive humanism and humanity often played a bad joke with people.

On the way back to the base only a few of us were sleeping. Fatigue, tiredness, but overwhelmed with emotions we realized that we had done a worthy deed. Let now they say that there was no battle there as such (we would have much more serious fights in Ilovaisk, Marinka, and Shyrokyne

village later). It is easy to say, but then why Special Forces like "Alpha," the Armed Forces of Ukraine, or any Special Forces from other agencies didn’t do it? Why did 60 fresh comers go to storm without any military experience at all? There was the fight. For each of us, it was the fight with ourselves. We overcame our fear. We left everything not for money, medals, and statuses, but for the sake of the country we loved, for the sake of the family that waited for us, for each of the brothers who went there being engineers, barmen, businessmen, and historians, but returned as soldiers. On that day, I again believed in people, in people who for the sake of higher ideals could sacrifice themselves.

On the base. A phone call to home. My favorite voice. We went to sleep. For us, it was the very beginning of a long journey.

АНР

The author is first on the left.

ILOVAIS’K

I strain at all force and from all sinews
But today again, as yesterday,
Have surrounded me, have surrounded.
And chasing me towards numbered flags

Wolf Hunt

It was the third month of our war. After the storm of Mariupol, a military routine began. From Berdiansk we moved our base to Mariupol. We housed at the school building and began to settle. The first impression was unusual. It was not feeling like in Ukraine at all. For me, it's like getting into a time machine and going back to the USSR era: a depressing city, gloomy streets, strange people... When we drove into Marik (shorten name for Mariupol), we were met by a billboard on which some local wrote: "Mariupol is not the city to which it is worth wasting your life." The first impression was then fully justified and intensified. Time had stopped here. When you walk around L'viv or Prague, you are pleased with architecture, people, cleanliness and order, care of your history. Along with the Gothic buildings, there are new churches and business centers. But in Mariupol, everything remained at the time from the 1970s. People still lived somewhere in the past, they did not care about the things around them; they did not care about themselves, maybe not everyone, but a lot of them. A sharp stratification of society was striking. The Lexus SUV with a typical Donbas posy person was driving by– a shaved, brazen man listening to chanson music and husking sunflower seeds and right next on the street some workers coming back from the factory. They had worked hard, but they went in slender convoys to the nearest pub – tired eyes and bent backs. They worked, drank, slept, again to work, on the day when they get a salary, they would get really smashed and so day after day, year after year... The residential quarters looks terrible. It seemed to me that in those houses no one lived – the grass on the backyards grew up to a human height, the buildings were shabby, but it turned out – there were permanent residents there. They just did not work on their property, or they thought that someone would do it for them... Then for the first time I opened the meaning of the "Russian world." The world of depression and despair, a world of envy and anger, the world where is someone to blame for all your troubles, and you just drink and complain, without trying to change anything. Of course, those people would not understand what we stood on the Maidan for, why we went to the war. People, who did not understand

such simple words as self-organization, solidarity, honor, and pride, will never be with us.

There were checkpoints around our base. To be on duty, there wasn't a pleasure. Initially, locals came there very often, everyone came to quarrel, insult and express their opinion. However, it was hard to call an opinion whatever they were expressing. We were forced to communicate with all those people politely and culturally correctly, which led them to wild enthusiasm. They could stand for hours and humiliate you, and then they got together and talked about the joys of life in Russia. Once a police uniform was brought to us– a black one, the same as the Internal Military Forces were wearing during the Maidan standoff. Someone thought that if the local people saw chevron "police," they would leave. That plan failed miserably: no one wanted to wear that suit. The same was with the joining the police. Everyone wanted to fight, but only few who wanted to become cops. There were even proposals to pay to the Ministry of Internal Affairs every month for them not to register us as police units. In fact, everyone remembered what the people wearing such clothes and chevrons had done. Everyone understood that where we turn up was thankful for cowardice and treachery of those guards of the law, although there were a couple of people who liked the idea. That was their own decision.

But we were not simple guys, and one day, one of us lost the patience. The man who was broadcasting the Russian propaganda media clichés finally got a chance to meet his own chastener[44] with all the consequences. It triggered a slight panic at the base. Chiefs commanded everyone to combat readiness. We expected rallies against us or even storming. The night passed calmly and in the morning... All the same supporters of the "Russian world" began to come to the checkpoint, but they were not empty-handed: they were carrying food, cigarettes, water, clothes... It seems to me that here the main mystery of Donbas was unveiled. All the time Ukraine cared about them, listened, bend under their demands, but those people did not need it. They saw only weakness in our kindness, responsiveness, and desire to help and solve everything peacefully. Those people are not accustomed to human relations. They need power above them. And they need not just power, but such power that would bend them so they cannot get up straight again. Such power that will

not consider them as something, then they will not be able to decide on anything, they will not think, their opinion will not be heard, and they can safely plunge into their world of anguish and despair, anger and hatred, seeking enemies everywhere, but not in themselves. In this regard, we are very losing to the leaders of the DPR, who understood this psychological moment and learned to manage from the best tyrants in the history of the mankind.

In addition to the routing on the checkpoints, there were also amazing trips to various sites, for example, to the port. You could not call yourself a part of our family, if you were not in the port, did not carry a most dangerous and important service on the lighthouse. No, it was not in the lighthouse in Shyrokyne village, but one in Mariupol. Long days last of waiting for the landing of the Russian troops from Azov while surrounded by the company of port movers and cooks-separatists, spitting to your food. The second most important object was the "bridge," connecting the right and left banks of Mariupol. There it was necessary to be only a couple of days, but the place, where that post was situated, was unforgettable. The local dump site rose majestically above the city, surrounded by the factories. The air in Marik is not very healthy: you literally see what you breathe in, and the evaporation from the garbage gave just a divine fragrance. And in such scenery, you sat for a couple of days, under the scorching sun and pouring rain, especially without moving and staring intently. Of course, it was not the main part of the service. There were training sessions, a training area, and detention of the Vostok[45] group in the city. Also, we made reconnaissance sallies, but those two places added a special charm to our life.

Before going to Ilovais’k, we had to go to Kyiv and pick up the ammunition for the whole battalion, but I had a special assignment. Commanders got a KPVT[46] heavy machine gun somewhere, but only without the weapon mount under it, which made that weapon completely useless. At that time it could become the most powerful equipment in our arsenal. I was instructed to find that weapon mounts. Why me? The story was shrouded in mystery. We arrived in Kyiv, everyone began to deal with organizational issues, and I rushed to look for the machine gun mount. The question was where to look for it. I thought about it for a while and... It was

constructed in the 1940s, it meant that it could be in the museum. So it was. The first idea was to expropriate. But since I did not want to be arrested for such a deal, that would sound very funny in the court. We came to the director and explained the situation. He advised me to ask in the army. We went to the military base, where they sent us away, although there had 200 heavy machinegun mounts in stock. Those should be still sitting there collecting dust and worthless for nobody. We came back with the thought that we would have to steal one from the museum. But it turned out that the man (the director of the museum) really worried about the country and the volunteers. He did not go with a flag and sing the anthem, but he really wanted to help. With the words "it was made for the war, that means it must fight," at his own risk, he gave the needed mount, risking his position, work and reputation. We loaded it all in a minibus and rushed to Kyiv. Yes, but we did not get there. At the first police checkpoint, we were stopped by valiant policemen. A standard set of questions about the documents and "show what is in the cargo." I did not know what he expected to see there, but not the weapon mount for a large-caliber machine gun. Actually, he hardly could understand that it was just a weapon mount. Before leaving, we threw things into the car and covered everything with a tarpaulin. When uncovered it, before his eyes appeared a real machine gun on wheels pointed toward him. A pause, no one knew what to say. We waited a couple of minutes; set in the minibus, closed the doors and left, and the cop remained to stand, steering to the horizon. I did not respect the police much before, but after that, it became clear that the police could not protect anyone. They were not taught to do it. They were taught to take a bribe, to beat students in overwhelming power, to plant evidence – also sounds like them, but they could not protect from real criminals.

We rushed to Vladimirska Street, where already loaded semi-trucks with ammunition and weapons have been parked. With a big pride, I showed the machinegun mount to the battalion commander, we loaded it into the car. We were ready to hit the road. Honestly, I did not even know how it would serve in a fight: that thing was constructed in 1946. Wheels, handles were hefty and clumsy, and we were in a war where the speed of maneuver was crucial. However, we did not have a choice. It was at least something, the opportunity to die in battle.

The road turned out to be very difficult. The trucks rode 60 km per hour. My car was last in convoy. Our sotnyk[47] was often falling asleep while driving, so I had to drive the entire route. The travel was boring and slow. But somewhere near Zaporizhia, a random jeep began to wedge into the convoy, brazenly: between the semi-trucks, then it cut off the escort and at the end stopped in front of the convoy, barring our way. We jumped out from the cars. A pot-bellied schmuck in a jacket ran from that jeep towards us followed by a woman with prostitute makeup on her face. The guy started yelling that we were driving too slow and hindering him that we did not know who he is and what would be done with us if he wanted. Without thinking, someone hit that pig under his chest; he sat down on knees, pulled out the phone and started calling someone. It turned out that it was some high-ranking cop who wanted to show his authority to a new woman, but he failed miserably. He dialed somebody, asked who we were, and when he found out, turned back with his tail between legs got back into the car. Apparently, he did not understand that time of such men ended – the time of the bastards wearing the uniform, who used to think that everything was allowed to them. Of course, nowadays all those animals had returned their positions, and they were doing the same chaos and corruption, but that time we did not know that it would be like this or we did not want to admit it would be possible. The trip after this incident went calm. We reached the base, unloaded and slept.

The trip to Ilovais'k became a little unexpected. Guys from other sotnyas[48] had already conducted reconnaissance battle in the outskirts of that city. There were first losses. Part of our sotnya held positions in the area which had been already successfully shelled by MRLS "Hail[49]." Miraculously everyone remained alive. And now in one day, a sotnyk disappeared from the base – he went to the meeting. He was gone for a long time, and it was alarming. Then he arrived, he had a puzzled look. He said to be ready for raid operation, but not for everyone. They somehow decided there that our group would stay at the base that time, and later the group would come up and join the operation. I did not like it. I found the commander in the smoking-room and began to explain that if I did not go, I would join Aidar[50] volunteer battalion (it was such a fashionable threat that we use: if we did not like something, we said that we would join the

Aidar, but, of course, no one left). For some reason it seemed to me that I should not miss that raid operation, it was so close to Donetsk, I was afraid to miss the storm of the city, to miss our victory. That time it all seemed so real. As a result, after a series of arguments, I got approval for joining the assault unit. On top of that, I pulled into it all my fellow guys. It always like this: you knew that it was not so bad on the base, but some part of you always pushed to take active actions and then usually it turned out into very interesting but very dangerous stories.

We began to gather. After the first battles, the rumors spread about their snipers; as if their rifles were very good, they fired at a far distance, and for some reason, they targeted only black armor vests, just like mine. I began to look for another color, not a bulletproof vest, but at least load carrying tactical vest. With pain and misery I managed to find a green one, there, of course, was no Mole system – all the pouches were integrated, and there were very few of them, but it was damn it, green and I would not be killed in it for sure. The bulletproof vest was still urgently needed. There were some, but the quality of them varied. Some bulletproof vests were brought by volunteers, and some were brought by different guys, and there was no confidence in their armor class. It was lucky if you could find the one purchased somewhere but not the homemade one. I had a black police type vest, like the 3rd class of protection, but it was very big. The plate was standard, but there was a lot of fabric: it covered the sides and almost the armpits. Of course, I understood that cloth would not protect anything, but it was psychologically easier somehow –I felt to be more protected.

We gathered in the last room of the hull, a chotovy[51] (the commander of the platoon) brought maps of the area. Well, something presumably can be called the maps – printouts from the Google Maps. And then the fun began. They began to briefing the objectives and plans to us. The objective was to enter the city and hold on the position, thereby diverting the enemy's attention, and someone from the other side would break into the center of the city. Everything seemed to be simple, but when they started to show the enemy’s positions on the map, I felt somehow uncomfortable. No one just knew where they were: here, and if not here, then there, maybe a tank here, but if not here, then just there. Precisely, we knew only the location of one of the fortified areas. The "minimum" task

was to reach it and try to capture that stronghold. Somehow we figured out what we should do. I was appointed to responsible for one of the groups, which was not very encouraging. We began to wait for the departure. In the darkness, several KamAZ trucks, “Zheleziaka” (DIY modified heavy armored KamAZ with the Utes machine gun aboard), several just cars, one of which pulled the KPV heavy machine gun on the mount I found in Kyiv.

The trip was not convenient at all. It was hot, in tented KamAZ was so dusty that nothing could be seen. People, like sardines in a can, sat one on the other. One shot of an RPG would decide the fate of all of us. On top of all that, my head ached, and nobody had a pill. I did not think about the war at all. We got to some place where unloaded. It became clear that it was not Ilovais’k. Somewhere nearby, but it was not it yet. I met friends from a good old organization, so we talked and remembered past deeds. I felt calm, a bit unusual, but in the norm. The deputy sotnyk wearing the cap of the Confederates and with a saber along calmed us – that man was able to instill morale. We stood there for about an hour, it turned out that the place where we were supposed to gather was shelled by “Hail.” Apparently, there was an information leak, although more likely it was done on purpose. We decided to move to the base. The convoy turned back, at the head of it was a van, from which the hand holding saber sticking out, we went home. Some scooters of another battalion were driving along the sides: they carried geese, apples and all sorts of small things. No wonder why those guys were called pirates by the people.

We got few hours for sleep. We did not undress – we lie wearing the armors. The back began to hurt. I had serious troubles with my back before the war, and the burden was exacerbated them. But I'm not alone – Medved is just like me. We took painkiller pills. The painkiller pills "Nimesil" helped us a lot! These pills become my inseparable companion of war. To the operation again, that time KamAZ was not covered with a tent, it was easier to breathe. Before getting into the trucks, there were some troubles: it turned out that the sotnyk did not want to take Aksion – he got in trouble, and he was ordered to stay on the base. Anyways, he got on KamAZ and went with us. In that battle, Aksion died. After that incident, I didn’t actively volunteer for combat operations anymore – let everything went its course. Everything had its time.

The road was long. I'd seen enough of the Donbas steppe, all those waste pits. I would not like to live there – everything was somehow gloomy, the villages looked like devastated, and the war didn’t touch them yet. On the way, we saw signs – 100 km, 70 km, and 60 km up to Donetsk. It made us happy – we understood how close we were to the epicenter of events, to the place where everything had begun and where it had to be finished. In KamAZ, I could not take my eyes off Aksion. He somewhere got a camouflage net, put it on a machine gun and helmet. He sat almost on the top of the booth, told something to everyone, smiled. The pieces of that net flew off, and he tried to put them back into place. But looking at him, I got an incomprehensible feeling: it felt like I saw a person for the last time. Involuntarily you remembered all his movements, you would want to come up and say that he had to stay, did not go anywhere ... But who would believe you? Or maybe it's just now, knowing what happened, these memories came.

We arrived on the open field of the farmland: there were a lot of military men, equipment – a transfer point in front of a dangerous zone. We did not have time to unload from the vehicles, as a shout was heard: "Mines!" We scattered ourselves wherever. Before that, I did not know what mines were and what I should be afraid of, so I was just afraid and running. There were no mines. I got out of the dugout and went to drink water in the shade. The bustle was around except for us there were a few battalions of volunteers and the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Military chaos started. The command was deciding on something, the soldiers tried to take time for rest, they had conversations about nothing. I met instructors from the "brethren" training – they were already in another unit. We remembered joint trainings, we joked, we pinned up each other about the fact that someone would not return home for sure. Then I was steering at the military vehicles around it didn’t happen to me to see tanks before. Everything was so unusual, although very old. At that time it was not scary, everything seemed to be not serious, like going to airsoft play.

We received a command to go. Everyone took the position. Let's go. Leaving that place, it became scary. At the very front, the burned-out military equipment could be seen. I always thought that it is safe to hide under the tank. Apparently, it was, but not always. The siren was activated by the motion sensors near the dugouts. After not a long drive we arrived at

the village. That was the last place before Ilovais’k. There were all the same shelters, equipment, and soldiers. Everything was pitted with funnels from shells. Everywhere around the busy warriors ran around without armored vests and weapons. We were met with respect – probably, we were looking very threatening. Immediately I saw fellow countrymen. They were a part of another battalion. Unexpected meeting! They were younger than me, and we used to go in for sports together, but now they look so brazenly and brazenly ask for cigarettes. It seemed like a couple of months had passed, but people had changed, and grew up a lot. However, they got what deserved for smoking anyways. We communicated with soldiers who noticed RGN hand grenades on us, they informed us that those grenades would detonate if a “Hail” shells would explode nearby. I was not happy with either the cause neither with consequence. We began to exchange things (it was like a market on the front line): we gave RGN hand grenades to them, they gave us F1 grenades. Then I first saw a grenade F-1: big, heavy, not like grenades what we had before.

The last forming-up. Some army officer reported that during two weeks the artillery was barraged the city and there was no stone left on the stone. And two hours before our arrival the control salvo destroyed remains of defensive structures – we only have to walk with a victory march through the ruined streets. Our commander and reconnaissance group were smiling. I only then realized why. “Sevastopol” (the callsign of the head of our recon) said not to be afraid– not everyone would be killed. Yeah, could I have a list of those who would be killed? Maybe I should not go? I started to be nervous: scary, my throat was dry and began to be sick. I' was trying to cope with that. Mandrake, from the excess of adrenaline there was a shiver in my hands.

As Vysotsky said, "the most terrible hour in battle is the hour of waiting for an attack." We got on. To the battle.

The convoy moved forward. Asphalt road, on both sides of which there was a field. Field and sunflowers were around. Those plants are in my memory. They bowed their heads and did not look at us – as if they were saying goodbye... Oh, yes, all the heavy equipment remained behind, we were driving only with our KamAZ trucks and jeeps, even something happened with our “Zheleziaka” truck. And then I had a question – what was the militia? We're kind of like an army, but looking at us, you could not

say that. Different forms, civil transport, no heavy weapons, automatic rifles, a pair of machine guns and a pickaxe with a hammer to attack homes. A pickaxe, a hammer, a rifle made an octopus of a soldier! The ammunition was limited! And from opposite side, they shelled mines, RMLS, and tanks were constantly moving. We looked more like insurgents who were at war with the army, and it actually was so. All Russian propaganda nonsense about the tractor drivers, miners fighting with taken equipment is to feed the semi-literate adherents of the "Russian world." Our reconnaissance noticed the movement. We jumped out of KamAZ. But that jump was not lucky for me – I jumped into a hefty bush with spines. At first, it did not hurt, but then everything itched horribly. It's a shame that there was no movement – someone just seemed. We went further. Again, there was the command to get off. Everyone jumped. An amazing picture I saw: one of the fighters jumped, and on the fly, his armor vest just splinted into small pieces. It turned out that there was a lanyard for a quick drop off and if you pulled for it, then you would no longer have armor. Medic tried to tie all those parts back, he somewhat tied it back. However, it would not be possible to take it off that easy again.

We got off. Asphalt road went straight, and we were sent a little to the left along the path. Not very pleased moment that the city was a few more kilometers away, and we had to cover the distance on foot along the field. But the order was an order. We formed the convoy. This was the most memorable picture to me: the field, the people formed snake column and cars was moving to the city, a hundred on the march. There was little pleasure in that campaign. We hung as much ammunition as it was possible on ourselves, got all the equipment, and we had to go far. Although looking at Medved, I realized that I was still lucky, he had hand machine gun. His partner turned out to be lazy, so he alone carried almost all the extra ammunition. But the price was not high if you were given a machine gun!

I went, sweat, my back hurt, there was no end to that road. And then I noticed: to the left of us something was moving across the field. I shouted to the commander. Everyone was disarrayed. We decided, since that thing did not shoot us, it was good enough. The whole field was pitted with funnels – apparently, the mortars were firing. We were entering the city through the residential area.

We appeared on a farm: the roof was broken; the grass was waist-deep. We ran to check out the buildings. The partner of Medved did it so quickly that he stumbled and flies into the bushes with a wild crash. Funny picture, but we did not want to laugh. It's scary to walk on the grass – it seemed that everywhere there were trip wires and mines. Maybe they were, but our luck was that we did not find them. We were moving further. And then it was the most interesting. We did not see promised piles of ashes that remained from the city. Yes, there were a couple of broken roofs on the farm, but the suburb itself was quite untouched. Unexploded missiles from “Hail” MRLS stack in the ground headed our directions while their tails aimed at Donetsk – obviously they fired our territory. I stopped near one of those missiles; looking at it for a while it was very interesting. And then geese came out of the grass towards us. They did not appear normal; it's strange how they were moving. It turned out that they had injuries from splinters: some had broken wings, others had broken paws. To be honest, it was a very unpleasant sight. It was like a horror film. There were no strong feelings. We were moving further and looking around, everyone was busy. I felt quite comfortable, maybe a little embarrassed by the lack of people except us, but got used to it very quickly. There was no fear, there was none at all when you were busy with something. We got to the streets with houses. Our task was to check every single one for the presence of the enemy. It was dangerous to enter the houses, nobody wanted to go first. I was certainly not a sapper, but I knew perfectly well where it was most convenient to plant a mine, and so all that running around the buildings made me worry.

Each yard was a potentially fatal place: full of corners, dark spots, and buildings where one could hide. In one of the sheds I heard a rustle, I approached the door, and carefully opened it, and a dog ran at me! At first, I did not understand that it was an animal. I shot, but fortunately, I did not hit it. The dog went away. That situation cheered us; before it was too boring to go.

On the left side from us, the firefight started in the distance. The “Shakhtersk” battalion got to the railway and started the fight. We also had an activity: here and there, single shots were heard, but the battle was not begun. It was such a feeling that we were being led somewhere. The enemies appeared and disappeared, they played with us.

It turned out that not everything was so bad – we had military vehicles with us – a tank and an infantry fighting vehicle. They fired at the forest in front. It inspired us, although in my memory I remembered pictures of burnt equipment. Then our chotovy leader got the idea – to stretch out a line and comb the bushes. We went into those “jungles.” The idea was good, but it seemed to me that others needed to be warned about such actions because leaning out of the bushes, I noticed the soldier who was aiming at them. He looked surprised, but I had a relief because of his slow reaction. We found the abandoned minibus. There were the packs of the ammunition. Apparently, someone was scared off and to not attract attention abandoned the transport, and went away on foot.

We came in the backyard. Through the basement window, I noticed a movement. It turned out that the family was hiding in the basement: a mother, three children, a grandmother and a man. I began the conversation; I asked them to go out into the street. They asked not to shoot them. Shoot?! But who had told that we came to shoot someone?! They came out into the light: all exhausted, thin and hungry, asked for water. I gave water, took out my MRE and gave it to them. So everyone did the same and shared their food when people we found, knowing well that we did not know how many days we would to be there and that tomorrow we could be hungry ourselves. The DPR spread rumors about the chasteners who would rape and kill everyone and shelled the cities.

Yeah, the shells immediately showed that Ukrainian army fired them, but for some reason from Donetsk city direction. I felt sorry for those people, but only then. Later the separatists posted the video from Ilovais’k when the Chechens enter the city, and there were the same people, they told how we mocked them (sure, with the help of stew and condensed milk we wanted to feed them to their death). They told them where we went and how many of us were there, and one even took his own daughter and tried to introduce her to the Chechens with the words: "These are our heroes." Well, you're an idiot, but why do give your child? Then my pity disappeared. Everyone got what he wanted: they believed in tortures and chasteners – they did not get it from us, but they got it from “friendly” Chechens, local drug addicts and drunkards from the neighboring country. Well, each to its own.

There were more impudent characters in the houses. Then it turned out that they would tell them our location. I could never understand this war. For them it was a war, they hated us; they were ready to kill only because we were Ukrainians. Remember the beginning of this war: Slovyansk, Donetsk. Tattered people with ripped bellies were tortured in basements – only because they used to speak Ukrainian. And for us is supposed to be an ATO[52], civilians deceived by Russian propaganda, brothers ... This is a war –there is no neutral out there: you were either with the enemy or with us, and it could not be in any other way. The brothers were before they let all that scam enter into our common home. We will win, we will deal with everyone in Kyiv and Donetsk, but we will never forgive – you betrayed us, betrayed the country, betrayed the family that we had been before.

The funniest thing was that it was scary to shoot. No, not because we could kill someone, but because we could kill our people. We moved along the parallel streets. And on the left, and on the right, there were our people, you had to shoot very carefully. In one of the yards, we found a shepherd dog, we fed him, and the dog went with us. Still lives on the base now. The dog was intelligent – we guessed it because if it hid, the mines shelling would arrive soon–it was high time for us to hide too.

We were approaching the fortified area the first high-rise buildings were visible. And then the tank driver from the UAF[53] declared that the turret did not spin, there are no shells and in general he "does not give f*ck." The crew of the infantry fighting vehicle reported the hole in the fuel tank and about expressed worries about RPG, which would guarantee to be shot at them there. Hmm, does it mean we are immune against the bullets and RPGs? Those soldiers dumped the battleground, and on the way back they fell into an ambush. You cannot escape your fate! My group moved to the side of the city, and the rest of the sotnya went to the right to the fortifications of the enemy. "Peaceful" cyclists began to ride, and right after them, enemy mortars started to fire. We hid in the building. Another chota started the fight on the approaches to the fortification. We tried to approach them too. At that time, our people burned the BRDM of the enemy, for which they got a snub: there was no equipment– it was necessary to seize the vehicle.

Lying behind the stump, trying to get somewhere, vaguely see the enemy, but clearly the nape of my fellow brothers, which makes me very carefully to aim and very cautious to shoot. The gunfight was going for about 30 minutes. It starts to get dark, the enemy has calmed down. We decide to move back a few streets and hold on there because the shells exploding very close.

Medved wanting to be a hero and covered the withdrawal of the sotnya with his machine gun– it looked very impressive. It was almost dark when we were leaving. The company from "Dnipro[54]" battalion was there with us. Slowly moving and looking for the shelter. At the crossroads tracers were flying over our heads, it is how they pointed to our location. When the sudden whistle sounded, we all laid... Silence... Aksion decided to joke...

The "Dnipro" company set their positions in the first house, and we – a little bit further. At night was complete darkness. I could not see anything. A backyard. We drove the cars in. Part of the group was patrolling, the other part housed in the building. Here the fear came. I entered the house, I could not see anything, I tried to find a place to sit down and along the way I ran into the others. Everyone spread out in the rooms, there was no light. I was trying to figure out from where the enemy could fire. I remembered the pictures of the destruction after the heavy shelling, and I started to think of the safest place to sit. The brick wall, they would fire from that side, the trajectory was like that, I tied to calculate, over there would be OK. Although it was complete nonsense – I did not know anything about mines! It seemed that the shells from MRLS "Hail" would definitely break through the roof and the ceiling. My back ached terribly, my leg began to numb. There were no analgetic pills. It was silent for a while. Everyone was in his place. Everyone had time to think, no one spoke. This awaiting exhausts the most. During the battle everything was simple. There we used our reflexes, instincts worked, and you just corrected yourself a little, and that's all. Here now was another thing: you felt your body, completely, every breath, every beat of the heart, as blood flowed through the veins. The brain started to work. You understood that something was wrong, snippets of conversation via the radio, shots from the place where we had come from. There should not be anyone either! Who shot?! Trying to remember how we entered the

city... Right there, then to the left, the road, straight, the field, the forest area, the road, the post, the village... Whistle... We heard explosion long away and silence, then whistling. The landing was closer! Someone began to get into a panic, cry "we all die!", "we must go!" there were talks about that we were betrayed. You did not think about it, but it involuntarily entered your mind. Betrayed. How to be? Fight? Leave? When? How? These thoughts flew through my mind.

A whistle, and explosion, windows are shaking already. Where was our artillery? Why silence?! On the radio, we've heard an order banned our artillery from the fire. This was not our battalion frequency – it was on UAF frequency. Why was artillery fire prohibited? Whistling. The explosion, you already felt how the building took a hit. The next will hit us for sure. Panic. I wanted to go sleep, so all that would end sooner. But you could not. Whistling. The explosion that you already felt and that's it... Fear was gone. There was emptiness. I did not care: to fight, to sit, to live or to die. I understood that they threw us to the slaughter. But I did not care. Everywhere was emptiness then. That feeling had come, and it won't leave.

So I wonder how the so-called authorities will cope with this. They saw our hatred during the Maidan, and they saw our contempt at the beginning of the war. What's next? What will you do with this emptiness? We are already not afraid of anything. It was scary on the Maidan when they tried to push us alive into the asphalt. Before that, it was terrible when their dogs were hunting for us on the streets when they broke into our houses at night, yet 5 minutes ago was dreadfully... Not anymore, now nothing is scary. There are no emotions left. There is an understanding of who the enemy is and who has always been that enemy. Now they must be afraid. Trying to betray us, get us away, they created own nightmare. People who had lost everything: friends who smiled 5 minutes ago and then died in their arms; the country which they had sold; faith in people. We have nothing left. We felt the emptiness and the clear understanding of who is ours, the enemy. It will not be possible to make an agreement anymore. The prisons, the 7th police departments, riot police, and national security departments mean nothing for us. They have nothing to frighten us, and now they do not even know what to expect from us.

Blast. Far away. The UAF soldiers without the permission of their command shelled on the enemy mortar position. Silence. I remembered the

home when heard the steps through the room. Someone called me. The sotnyk asked if I had slept enough or not. What the hell I slept? But still, I had to change people on the guard watch. I went out, the morning light was getting bright outside. I contemplate the house – a beautiful building in two floors, a neat patio, summer shower, grapes, a garden... Well, what they have been missing? I listened to the silence. There were silhouettes in the building across the street, I reported about it to the chotovy… Civilians. Again, those "neutrals" – you not allowed to open fire. Steps down the street from the other side, conversations heard steps again. There were holes in the ground on backyard after night shelling – close, very close. The movements were noticed down the street again, but no permission to open fire. Well, at least they did not tell me to get lost, I thought. The roar of the engine was heard – something very heavy. Ours? Not ours? No one knew. We were waiting... Everything was annoying me, I found canned meat, and started eating it: I did not know what else I could do – shooting was not permitted anyway.

It's getting daylight outside. Fellow soldiers began to get out of the house and walking out in the yard. Everything somehow calmed down; no shooting, joking. Everyone was somewhat relaxed – looked like the worst was over and the day would be easier. My watch was over. I was wandering around the yard, trying to find out about our situation, but no one knew anything. On the army, radio frequency can be heard that many tanks were coming from Khartsyzsk. I wanted to believe that those were ours, but the problem was there were no ours units out there. We were arguing about where to aim when fire from the RPG-18 “a fly[55],” it's hard to believe that it would work. However, it was somehow indifferent. I was tired of armor vest and combat boots after two days. I took it off and lay down on the bench. Guys also rested. Relax – as if we came to our vacation house. I had lain for a while and then went to the house. It was beautifully furnished, not poor people lived there. I found a plastic toy like ice cream; I called Khoma, that I had found ice cream. He was so naive that he came, but he left frustrated – he did not like plastic ice cream very much.

The shooting started suddenly from everywhere. In front of us, behind, on the left, and on the right. Nobody knew who was shooting and why, and it was far away for now. We moved 100 meters from the house to

the head patrol. We were taking positions in the center, our guys – on the flanks. Hot. The second or third day I did not sleep. I told my partner that I am going to sleep – it was still not clear who was fighting with whom and who was winning. I went under the concrete slab, I prepared grenade to be handy (I did not really want to be captured), I looked at my tattoos. Captivity was not an option at all. I consoled myself with the thought that if they tried to capture me, everything would be loved with a grenade, although I was not sure that I would be able to pull the safety ring out, it was not clearly decided – maybe yes, maybe not.

I fell into sleep and completely turned off. I woke up because of the tremors on my side. Shooting around and everything was very close. MRLS "Hail" missiles were flying above us, targeting the positions of the military forces behind us. The APC rushed with the men in the uniform sitting on it. We looked at each other with my partner... It was clear that he, too, did not know – our they are or the enemies. In the house across the street of us, we could see people. The shooting was approaching. It turned out that it was one of our units was coming to us for reinforcements. Where we passed through yesterday, they met resistance. All night our sotnya was surrounded by enemies. The snap from the shot was very close. Apparently, the shot was fired from Dragunov sniper rifle. Sniper from "Dnepr" volunteer battalion misunderstood and shot the wrong direction. In that war, it was so ordinary. Some well-equipped men arrived; it was our storm-assault unit and commander of the battalion. Become absolutely quiet. For about 5 minutes. Then explosion blasted on the balcony of our house. A 40 mm VOG-15 grenade landed – it did not hurt anyone, but the accuracy was a bad surprise for us. I set in the backyard near were sitting Aksion and Khoma, we've been photographed, the last our photo... Our AGS launcher arrived. We said that we could lead him to an advantageous position, but for some reason, he decided to shoot from the balcony of the second floor... A shot was fired, and another one, and one more. Then in response, the grenade landed in our backyard. Well, who would decide for a firing position in the house where all personnel stayed? A few wounded as a result... The firing started, I hid down in the cellar. There a great company gathered down there, someone immediately offered homemade canned food to me. However, we did not sit for long. Command decided to do something. Shootings were around us – we shot back. We could hear their

military equipment working. We could not hear our equipment – we simply did not have any military equipment.

I was trying to call home, but the connection was poor. Finally, the connection got through. Only there wouldn’t be gunfire at this moment! The call got interrupted. I called again, trying to say that everything was fine with me. Shooting resumed. The connection was lost. At this place would be good to write about steel shine in the eyes. But I did not see it. Yes, someone was joking and trying to show that he was not scared, but it looked unnatural. Someone was just silent. Everyone experienced it differently. The common was only one thing: nobody knew what to do.

The decision was made to go on assault. In the chaos, the instructions were given. I hardly understood where to run, and what to do was a complete mystery to me. The first group ran out, the second group followed, it was our turn to run, but instead, for some reason, Aksion and Khoma ran in that direction... I decided to run to another place. Our assault group just sat under the fence. The second sotnya was trying to move forward. AGS shelling was heard over our heads. Explosions were heard too far - out of range. Now I knew about AGS, but back then for me, there were black spider webs in the sky of unknown origin. Mine. We ran for cover to the sides. Some were sitting under the fence, the others under KamAZ, and I appeared in the yard completely alone for some reason. Explosions of grenades were heard. Aksion and Khoma went into the backyard, and the enemies started throwing grenades at them. Khoma covered one grenade with himself. He was terribly turned inside out. Aksion got a splinter in his eye. I thought so then. The rest of the guys were trying to throw grenades in return. And then was the most offensive thing. There was a video of that battle posted by the separatists. So: they had F-1 grenades, and we have 2 killed and many wounded, and we had wonderful RGD grenades that only scratched one separatist’s ear. "ATO" and that's it!

One of our commanders walked and did not hide, although the sniper was firing at us. But that officer only opposed that he had been in Afghanistan, and he would not hide from any sniper. Pulling out our dead soldiers was necessary. We did not abandon our men. Smoke grenades. Suppressive gunfire. Guys were now with us. Aksion still breathing, clenched his teeth, quick breathing. There were blood and bandages. Khoma’s heart did not beat any longer. More wounded men.

In the backyard, I heard a familiar voice. I went there: “Cousin” and his group occupied the house. We greeted each other. I have never been glad to see him, but not now :)

Chotovy was looking for me. He shouted in a voice unlike his own. I also tried to shout to him, but he did not hear. I ran over to him, and then back, and someone told me not to run across the road anymore – the machine gun was shooting through there. I ran into the house, and there was already a part of our sotnya. A man with children was riding around our position by scooter. What kind of people are you? Don’t you feel sorry for your children? Another was walking around our garden and gathering apples. It was in the midst of the battle! He was taken away by our reconnaissance group.

The order came to withdraw. We took cover from the fire. The other sotnya was embarking on vehicles. Then it was our turn. We jumped into KamAZ, Aksion and Khoma were with us. We were going home. But actually, we just stayed and waited in place. The truck full of men stood in a middle of the streets where grenades and shells were fired. The territory was shot all over and observed by enemies, but our truck just stayed, waiting for something. Time stopped for me. The seconds were insanely long.

Finally, we’re moved. I was the tallest – my head was out above the cabin. A dream target for the sniper! We kept the continuous fire. On the move, it was very difficult to hit anything, but it's not easy for them to shoot at moving target neither. We got out of the city and stopped in the middle of the field. Convoy was in the open field. We were staying and waiting for someone. I cannot describe how uncomfortable it was. Then we moved.

We passed the military checkpoint. Those guys would not return from there. The steppes were around. Road. We got to Starobesheve – it was still under control of Ukrainian Armed Force. Here was the hospital where the wounded were treated. I called home, I told that everything was fine – so we just drove to the raid, although my relatives at home had already known where I was and they did not particularly believe in "everything is good," but if I could call, it meant that I was alive.

Guys were photographed, they were exchanging their heroic adventures, and if they had an order, they could take Ilovais’k and even Donetsk this day. The countryman bought me ice cream. It was the most

delicious ice cream I eat. I was about to look for Khoma to apologize for the plastic ice cream... We loaded and drove. In a couple of days, Starobesheve village would not be ours.

Night. A city was visible in the distance, flashes... We went home. Depressed state... Refueling, white sheet, and blood stains on it, a familiar face, but no familiar jokes... I fell asleep at immediately when arrived at our base. It seemed that it was the end, but the front collapsed and the kilometers of our land was taken by the enemy. We felt like no one would defend the homeland except for us – some military units just ran away. We were preparing for the defense of the city, which we had not so long ago stormed...

SHYROKYNE VILLAGE

... I live, but now they're surrounding me
Animals, who didn't experience wolf's cry, –
These are the dogs, distant our relatives,
We considered them prey before.

Wolf Hunt 2

After Ilovais’k a difficult time began. The troops were demoralized, the prospects were vague. The future did not seem rosy. On the Azov sea, direction separatists had the freedom to move as they liked, or rather they were allowed to do it. The situation was very shaky: their SRG[56] groups were going into our rear, we had firefights on the outskirts of the city, they forced us to withdraw from Novoazovsk, then from Shyrokyne. The city went to sleep and woke up with the cannonade of artillery. The UAF “warriors” ran from the checkpoints at the sight of trucks loaded with grain, imagining themselves hordes of Chechens. We stood – we had nowhere to go. The “Minsk Agreements” were signed. Somehow everything was stabilizing, there was time to regroup and think. We went with Medved to be treated in hospital – our backs did not withstand those loads. It was also interesting to see what was happening in civilian life.

Everything was quiet in my city. Patriotism decreased, crooks of all stripes began to crawl out, who used the name of the “ATO” and the Maidan to get themselves government paid positions. Local crime groups understood that the name "Right Sector" could no longer be a cover for making money; instead, this name would help them to get arrested, so they renamed themselves into all sorts of pseudo-battalions and continued protection racket to small businesses. Lugans’k and Donets’k gangs were settling in a new territory. The cops were still afraid of volunteer fighters, but they were slowly returning to their old habits and deeds. They organized trips to the safe places of the “ATO” zone to obtain "combatant veteran" status. Most people ignored the war and lived a peaceful, "vegetable" life. The old power probes the ground for return; they covered with Ukrainian flags and with "worry" for the country.

What were we doing? We were being treated. And we were also working. In Ilovais’k, we came to the understanding that it was possible to win the war, but for this, it was necessary to finish what was started on the Maidan, and for that, it was necessary to do a lot. We’re building the Organization. Many people were very disappointed, and we started

practically from the very beginning. It was a very difficult and dynamic period. One day I will write about everything when it will be possible.

Our group became bigger. The number of people was decent. We started to do serious business, there was a resource. At the same time, our battalion grew and received the status of the regiment, which enjoyed us.

The intensive battles resumed with new strength. Health condition did not yet allow us to return to the war and to our disappointment, we missed the start of the Shyrokyne operation. Somehow being cured, we arranged our return to the regiment.

We went with a friendly company: Medved, 2 people from our sotnya and guys, with whom we were familiar in the Organization. With wonderful company 8 hours of the trip past unnoticed. We shared our plans for the future and memories. The war really brings people together. Here you quickly understood whom you could rely on, and who needed to be circumvented.

At dawn, we arrived in Mariupol– a city that I did not like, but it almost became my native. We were going to have a cup of coffee. It's brightening. In the distance, Novoazovsk was visible, a little closer – Shyrokyne. I would rather go to the base, but... How would they meet us? Did not forget us? But I was worried about nothing. Only after arriving, our sotnyk met us – our Batia. He asked about our health, our readiness to fight. Of course, we were ready! Why would we come here then!

The morning forming-up. Batia did not forget about us, asked to go out before the ranks. He said that these were the guys who fought with him during the first days. His words were very pleasant in front of fellow soldiers and touched us deeply.

In the canteen, our friends came to greet us – these people with whom we stormed Mariupol, Ilovais’k. There were not many of them left. The others were gone, and then I understood why. There were many questioning. Everyone thought for some reason that we hid from the cops. We smiled mysteriously, which warms up interest even more. All day passed like that.

Closer to the evening, everyone began to gather for a raid. I still did not know if I would be going or not, but Batia ordered that Medved and I should definitely obtain a weapon. So it meant we're going. I choose a load carrying tactical vest, adjusting it for myself. I had no emotion, as before.

Everything was simple and calm. It's already like a part of you. In such conditions I found myself comfortable – this was like to return home after a long trip. I haven’t talked to new people yet, they watched us warily. I got to go with the DShK[57] crew. That was exactly what I need for still not fully recovered back. Medved went with the SPG-9[58] group.

We formed-up before departure. It was an amazing sight. The night. Sotnya was before the battle fully equipped. Bat’ia had a speech and wished us a successful hunt. He knew how to motivate – you just wanted to do your best after his speech, you wanted to kill everything alive or die in the battle.

It took us one hour to get there. It's quiet there, but if there's a fight, then it could be heard in Mariupol. In the back of the truck the smell of gasoline from the electric generator, but it disturbed nobody – everyone smoked. We passed near the "castle" – it was the settlement of Berdiansk, where the operational headquarters was located. Further on winding streets, humpbacks and sometimes off-road we moved to Shyrokyne. We drove another road every time – just in case. This time we went through the "Houses." The "Houses" or the right flank were the vacation cottages on the beach. We got off near the "small lighthouse," there were the signalers.

The DShK crew should take a position in the "big lighthouse," and it's about 250 meters from us. Well, that’s ok, we took DShK. The machine gun itself was not very heavy – the whole problem was on its stand. It was a big, uncomfortable tripod, which weighed a lot. We managed to carry it. We were already met by the Donbas Volunteer Battalion – very unpleasant guys, imagining themselves to be the best warriors in the world. We sent them to the hell, and they sent us. We passed by each other. Three months of treatment of my back had passed in vain. Full equipment with ammunition plus a DShK had its negative effect. Back so hurt, that I could neither to bend, nor to sit down, and on top of that painkiller pills were left on the base. Need to go to the post. We went together with my countryman. Dugouts were the central position at the height, the hill, on top of which the trenches. Dark.

We went around checking out everything. On the right side the sea and cottages. The whole path was beaten by mines. Here was the pit on the right, now on the left, again on the right, and there was a hefty pit, then a direct hit in the path. We reached the trenches. On one of the mounds, we

noticed a covered ATGM. "This is a great find, we are lucky" – we thought. Probably, the Donbas battalion forgot! We went there. Eh... It's just an empty tube set covered with a carpet to look like a position in the distance. We walked around and examined everything. It did not look very good.

The trenches were shallow, sometimes ground fell and filled it. Dugouts were completely wrong – just a pit, on which they put a metal plate and sprinkled with the ground. There was only one normal funk-hole, but it was used as a toilet.

In general, there was no place to hide from the “Hail” missiles or heavier artillery fire. Realizing that I would not go into the dug-out (I could not be able to bend down), I suggested to my fellow crew to go to bed, while I went walking through the trenches – there was no thermal imager, and nothing was visible. I listened to the sea and the wind. A few hours passed.

We went to the “Lighthouse.” Quiet and smooth. Actually in a fire-group during the trench war, it was very boring: I’d either rested on the “Lighthouse” or on a position, all the movements were strictly timed by schedule. The “Lighthouse” building had already been beaten enough. The first floor was still in good shape – only traces of accidental shards were visible, but the rest was destroyed. The roof, the walls were in the holes: from all kind of ammunition from bullets to mortar mines. Separatists had such a habit: if they did not know where to shoot, they fired at the “Lighthouse.” But the building was strong and still stood. We had slept. We needed to eat. The most interesting thing was how to warm up the food. In the building, it was unsuitable due to smoke and dust. Since we were on the sea coast – I wanted to breathe some fresh air. We had to go out on the street. And on the street, every place was adjusted to enemy shoot. The walls protected out of the bullets, but as for the AGS grenades, we had no cover. So we sat, drank tea, ate tinned meat, looked at the stairs beaten by the mines ahead of us and waited for something to come on to your smoke. But it did not always happen.

I was walking around the “Lighthouse” position and find... "Nimesil" [59]! During the war, a lot of people had trouble with their backs, and somebody forgot it. It’s a game changer; the war will go differently from

now on! We needed to find a position for the DShK. Because of its stand, it could be located only in dugouts. We pulled it there.

There were two ways to the dugouts. The first was on the right along the slope, bypassing the whole hill, which served as a cover – and the way to get into the far trench. The advantage of that road was security. The one could not be seen, and could safely go and see the most beautiful scenery. We saw the sea from the height of the hill, the ruined cottages and the road-beaten by shells. The disadvantage was the distance: far and all the time at an angle. The second way – would be to left the "Lighthouse," and go through the ruined sports ground and ran straight into the trenches. It was three times faster than to pass by the hill. But there were drawbacks – you could be seen, and the sniper could fire from the houses. The first and the second road would not save a life for sure; it was a matter of chance. We went a short way and got into the furthest dugout, only on the left side. This one was not finished. No parapet – just concrete blocks, and they had a cover panel on top of them. You could be seen, and you could be shot, but because of the characteristics of the terrain, it was very difficult. There was also a stand left from the "Utios" machine gun, which was blown up during the first Shyrokyne withdrawal.

We placed a machine gun there – just set and covered with a grid. It turned out that we had only a tape with 30 rounds and it was only one. The firepower of our position raised some doubts. From there you could see the left flank, boiler building, and stadium. Not much, but better than nothing. And the trench war began: we sat, watched their positions and waited, waited, waited...

From time to time, the shooting was going. Those did not carry a particular danger to enemies or to us. Simply everyone wanted to shoot and to defuse the situation there were meaningless fire exchanges on distances of 600-900 m with AK rifles. Although I noticed that some guys after such shooting made a notch on their rifle butts... Well, well... if it goes that way, soon we had to take pouches for additional rifle butts because soon there would be no place to write down the regiments of dead enemies.

Sometimes mortar mines landed, but it happened rarely. When someone thought that there would be an attack, shelling began. So a couple of days passed. All that time the AGS fired at us, from 10 AM to noon. We

calculated that constantly at that time there was a movement in one of the houses. We decided to fire at that position.

All took their positions – DShK, SPG-9 and our AGS were ready to fire. Order to fire. SPG got jammed. Guys quickly fixed the problem and we got it started! In a few minutes, SPG-9 launched a dozen of charges. The SPG-9 crews were very good. We helped to fire with a machine gun – it seemed like we got the target. Even medics desperately fired from the AK rifle (they had only one rifle for both of them). The last shots, – and as in the action movie a piece of the roof flew above the building and fells slowly, and our bullets flew through the windows. The explosions are seen. And silence. They will not be adjusting their fire from that window anymore.

We were expecting the response. We left the position and went to the "Lighthouse" position. For 15 minutes there was silence. Then the mines began to land: the 82mm and grenades from AGS. VOGs fell right into the place where we used to eat.

At night we went again to the post. I suggested taking away the DShK from the position – it was clearly detected, and it was dangerous to work from there again for the second time, but everyone was too lazy to move it. So it was there during the whole rotation. The sky was full of stars. We climbed to the parapet. There was a gap through which everything was perfectly visible. Handsomely. There was the sea, the starry sky, the outline of our positions, the destroyed village. On the shore there was a hill, on top of it, there was a cross and our flags hanged. Separatists were enraged, but they were afraid to take it away. Below, the church was situated – the desired target for many pagans.

The mortar started to fire the left flank, our artillery responded back and then silence. At the day, we went to the "Lighthouse'. And the eternal argument started again: which way to go? In a detour, I did not want to go either. Better a short way, but only if we run. A fellow countryman had another idea – to walk a short way, but exactly to walk, and not to run there. We walked. Nobody fired on us, but there was only one but. You must minimize the risks because of the war you were responsible not only for yourself but for your crew, your fellow soldiers, who in case of emergency would come to save you. And no one knew how it would end for them. A

couple of days later at that place, the sniper will kill the fighter of Donbas volunteer battalion.

The day was quiet, occasional shooting. We were annoyed when we went to the toilet. You could not do it inside the buildings – those were our positions, but on the street – it was not pleasant. I did not like the prospect of dying at such an embarrassing moment.

In the evening, shelling began. I‘ve met that cheering on the “Lighthouse” position. The building had a basement. It's safe there. Self-propelled artillery was firing, 152 mm shells. The position already shook, but direct hits were made. The missiles didn’t land on the position, they landed further. The shelling finished, and we ran to the blindage positions to see if there were any movements of the enemy. There was sitting our military spotter. The most pleasant person with whom I had communicated on the positions. He was 65 years old, balanced, intelligent, with a sense of humor, knew his work. He pointed at the metal plate above his head, said that the machine gunner tried to chase him out of his position. And it was true – there were bullet marks on the ceiling. He told me how the Internet saved his life. He sat there, played with his phone and suddenly something caught his attention on the Internet so that he bent his head over closer to the screen and at that moment the bullets hit. Holes at the level of his head were visible until now. He worked flawlessly. The mines landed side by side – I thought so, but he said it was 100 meters minus. He saw the whole picture of the battle, understood what would happen and successfully guided our artillery.

The enemy’s AGS was firing on our positions. The grenades landed close and precisely but we were covered in the shelter, and there was no danger. Quiet. After 10 minutes the guys went outside. At that moment, on the entrance from the basement, between guys a VOG grenade landed. Only single one. As a result: one has wounded groin, another had a splinter in his head. They were evacuated. An accident. Probably, the enemy crew of the AGS had one grenade left, and they fired it our side for good luck. He was lucky, but we were not. In the trenches, it depended little on you. You could minimize the risks, but if fortune turned away from you, nothing would help.

Everything went like this – calmly, smoothly... Shelling was as ordered by a seize fire agreement. No one was moving anywhere, everyone

was static in place. We as gladiators in the arena did a kind of the show. At the right time, we moved to action, and if we kept on moving forward, they would stop us. The enemy had the same situation. It reminded the theatre, a show for someone.

One of the most unpleasant events was to rotate from the positions. They knew when we did it, and we knew when they did a rotation. We agreed not to shoot at that time. But we were rotating by the Donbas battalion, and they were known, devils. They were heard and seen for several kilometers. They drove close to the positions of the enemy with the lights on, and then they stopped and started shooting from all the guns. Where? What for? It was a mystery to all of us. It became clear why they always had such big losses. You were in a truck fully loaded with the ammunition, ATGMs, VOGs, you could not shoot, but just sit and wait to arrive if lucky or not. I could not understand why the personnel was transported with ammunition. It, of course, saved the gasoline, but if a shell hit the car, you would have neither ammunition nor people.

We reached the base – the time for rest. A couple of days nobody asked you to perform any duties. You even did not have to do morning exercises. What bliss.

Everything had changed a lot since our last arrival. There were more people. There were almost no old timers. There were a lot of equipment, artillery, tanks, and new units. It was certainly a plus. But I would argue about the quality of the personnel...

The problem was that we had many fighters without proper evidence for different reasons. And now when the properly employed received the salary, which was a decent amount of money. They had to withdraw a certain amount for themselves, and what’s left they gave to the common need and from that common resource all the rest not properly employed would get paid. That was the right thing – it was a fighting brotherhood, a collective. If your fellow soldier wasn’t feeling good, that meant you felt the same way too... Previously, we did not have any salaries, no one even thought about it. We were not there for the money. We had great goals. There were difficulties sometimes, but people from the civilians tried to help, we tried to help each other out. I remembered how I got some money and found out about the needy situation with the guys from other unit and battalions. If it was necessary, I sent all money to them. And it did not

bother me. It was our common war, and, no one else except your brothers-in-arms would help you. The brothers-in-arms... Now that word almost vanished from use. Well, except that on the Internet, to emphasize their importance, they said: "bro," "guy," "little bro"... How enraged it was! I did not want to go into battle with fake "bros." It was safer to fight with brothers-in-arms.

I asked to go serve to the checkpoint to reduce the concentration of the negative around me. By the way, it was interesting to see how truly the situation about Mariupol was shown on TV. I was going to the positions – now it was a safe place, but traces of past fights were visible. Here and there, leftovers from “Hail” and “Whirlwind"[60] MRL missiles were seen. There were a lot of trenches and dugouts. There was even an anti-tank ditch, but not very deep and wide. That was the whole line of defense. It was clear why we lost Debal’tseve. All that was a fake: high-profile projects “The wall,” and “The Defense of Mariupol.” Huge sums were allocated to carry out those projects, and then everything was stolen. We saw it, but we kept silence. We could not change anything...

It was a time for departure back to Shyrokyne village again. Medved with SPG joined ZU-23-3 crew. I stayed in the same role. We went and did not know yet that it would be the last rotation in Shyrokyne for us. I hope the last just for now. We were given the task of digging up and building up our positions to the maximum – before that was a direct hit of mine in a dugout. Not even direct hit, but slightly to the side, but it was enough for the walls to collapse. As a result, the Donbas unit had lost one soldier, another one was seriously wounded. We arrived under fire, but as we took positions, everything calmed down. The following days were quite boring, and almost all the time it was so, except for the last days.

The objectives were set, but how to do it was not explained. We got the scapula and a scrap. Our sotnya began to dig everything around the "small lighthouse." It was the right thing to do: if you would be surprised by artillery shelling, you could always jump in trenches.

Our small unit needed to make positions for the DShK. There was no longer a large stand. Instead, we took a small one, which was convenient to use from the buildings and it was much lighter. However, there were no buildings left. After the last arrival, a couple of buildings disappeared. It

took me a while to realize why it happened until I found a video on the Internet how Donbas military unit made their fire positions where all the personnel located. It immediately became clear to me where the buildings were and why there were always such losses.

It was unreasonable to establish a machine gun position on the “Lighthouse” – a very narrow view was from there. We decided to go to the dugouts instead. But the difficulty was that small stand under machine gun was useless in the trenches. We decided to make a bearer from bags with sand to raise the gun. People decided to leave digging for tomorrow.

Shyrokyne was a punishment for separatists. They sent only locals to the village on the front lines, which we successfully suppressed with fire, and the Russians were safely waiting in the Sakhanka.

But we still had to dig in. We chose a dugout with a good overview. We started digging. It was very difficult to build something. One part of the dugout was clay, which was not so easy to dig, and the other was sand, which simply did not keep the form. We did not have enough of sandbags, and it was simply impossible to find the engineers. They supposed to be there, but they were not. I did not know for sure how the separatists were doing, but it was clear that they were constantly getting stronger, moving vehicles and constructing something. But on our side, almost everything was made just for a good look. There were no construction equipment or vehicles, no forms poured with concrete, and there were not any sandbags to collect sand and to build up walls. We simply dug up, creating the visibility of the work.

When so-so improved the position, I suggested do a few more. It was a trench war and if we work now, next time we already would be protected from the hit. Especially when operating DShK, the sound of which was hard not to hear, and the flames of it could be seen very far away. But the crew decided that "well, it is alright, and in case, we'll get to the trench and shoot from there." It was a brilliant idea. The guy did exactly the same thing a couple of days before us: he climbed up to the parapet with PK hand help machine gun and unleashed several dozen bullets. Then VOG landed close, and that was the end for him. I went to the “Lighthouse” and noticed the engineers... Funny picture: one man dug, the second commanded, and another 6 were guarded that site. I did not know, maybe it was right.

The days passed quietly, there were almost no firing. The OSCE had come visit to the separatist’s side, and they were building something actively, the work of equipment was heard. We listened to their radio frequency: “Altay” (one of the main DPR "officials") had a birthday. They were preparing a surprise for us or just tried to scare us. They were aware of the fact that we heard them. We were sitting in a damp cellar and waiting for the battle.

I have fortuned that in the basement with me was a guy with whom we fought from the very beginning of the war. He was from Russia, came to us during the Maidan, where he actively helped our revolution. He joined us as war begun. He was a very interesting person, with a holistic worldview and persistent convictions. Talking with him was a pleasure. And as a warrior, he showed himself perfectly: there were no bluffs, but there was a clear understanding of what was necessary to be done. He performed all his duties without a doubt. He had only one problem – he could not go back to his homeland, and our country did not give him citizenship. Apparently, he did not deserve it. And many such people came to help us to fight with the aggressor, leaving their families, their homes and countries. But instead of gratitude or at least granting them citizenship, they had received nothing, although they did more for us than the ministers and governors who received their positions and then immediately became citizens of Ukraine[61]. Now separatists would say that they all knew that and we deserve it. We made the Maidan, the US State Department helped us and something like that, but there was one thing they did not understand: it's only because of them and Russian invasion we did not finish the revolution. The revolution, which they could not understand. They hardly could find the truth when the only source as they watched Russian TV. Instead of driving out all those officials and changing something, we had to go to the war. And not with the "locals," as their propaganda said, but with the external invaders and its mercenaries. There were also ideologically driven people on their side who dreamed of something, tried to change something on the other side, but the masters removed them. However, we have a similar removal process going against us.

About on the third day, AGS started to fire. The machine guns started to fire too. We ran to the position. We spotted from where the enemy was

shooting. We unleashed a couple of salves from the DShK machine gun, and our dugout wall fall collapsed and destroyed – that side made of the sand. It wasn’t clear if we killed someone or not, but that we had to dig again was for sure. We did not have time to go into the basement, as the AGS fired again. We hid.

Warm food was delivered to our positions. It was very nice – we felt bad eating Ramen and MRE. The guys unloaded some of the cans and took them to the basement. As I remembered, the driver was always in the car, but now he needed something, and he went to the signalers. Boom! A missile from an ATGM hit the car. No one will eat meatballs, except us.

While everything was quiet, I watched the work of our sniper. He was also from my city. He was about forty years old, calm, calculating, exactly what a man of his profession should be. Constantly working with the maps, noting something, calculating, then he left and did not appear for a couple of days. Upon his return, he had all the enemy's firing points, information about their outposts and a couple of wonderful stories, which were confirmed by radio interceptions. He was one of the few who took his service seriously. Even on the base, he used to improve himself, which induce nothing but respect. If would say only our regiment consisted of such people, it would be safe to say that we were building a new army.

It's time to move to the base, but Batia said that we had worked badly and gave us a chance to improve it. His gift was another day on the positions. Closer to the evening we tried to spot their AGS, which pretty much, annoyed everyone. We hit the left flank from the rifles, but the separatists were shouting in their radio about 120 mm mortars. Sakhanka village (where Russian artillery located) replied calmly, they said to them, calm down, we still had a truce. But in an hour later the first explosions were heard, their mortars began to work. Our crews came. I did not know what they had done with shells – it won’t fly far away now, but the shelling was difficult to detect. We advanced beyond the front line, almost to the positions of the enemy. At first, everything went well. We fired, there were hits. But their artillery also did not sleep. Their reconnaissance advanced, they were trying to find our mortar positions.

At that time we were already hidden in the shelters. The explosions from their self-propelled artillery were very close to each other, and they hit very heftily – almost a funnel into the funnel. We intercepted on their radio

frequency that our position was spotted. I told it to the commander, but he refused to leave. Their shells got our men. One was hardly wounded, then more were hardly wounded. The trouble was that they were on the enemy territory. We ran out from our cover and tried to reach their location. It was not very pleasant to move through open terrain when shells were landing overhead. Halfway I heard the whistle. I fell... Unsuccessfully: I fell in the mud. I got up and ran further, only it was very insulting that I was completely dirty and wet, but the mine landed about fifty meters from us. I was jumping into the dugout. The fight was closer to the left flank. The infantry advanced to take the wounded. We were covering with suppressive fire. We could not come. Separatists were very close to our men. For some reason they requested to seize fire – they also seemed to have wounded men. We agreed.

Silence. But then, from our hill, the PTRD[62] rifle was shooting. Without any aiming and it was not clear why. Once, two, three. Their mortars began to fire again, and we had not taken away the wounded yet. It's bad, but it's bad that we could not take the wounded, every second was important to them. The fragment cut the back of the head of the commander of the unit.

Our DShK was firing. It was a delightful sight. The dugout, the darkness. And then the firing, the whole hill was lit during those shots. The flame of fire almost flew from the barrel for a meter. The dugout was ruining on you, you could not see anything because of the sand in your eyes, and we had plugged ears. Several firings and their house started to burn. They were trying to run across. It was clear that we did not hit them, but I thought that they were very scared. We were shooting until the end of the tape.

The wounded were already with us, they were taken to a hospital. The commander will not be with us in a couple of days. He was from Siberia, a very good and brave guy; he fought for our Motherland, while some Ukrainians sat out at home and went to the elections.

We had no more ammunition left for DShK. And it was stupid to shoot a second time from the same position. We crawled into the dugout next to ours. The mortar was trying to hit us. Several shells landed in front of the shelter, but they didn’t hit anything, and we were no longer there

already. We were waiting for a couple of hours. Before our eyes, there was a picture of a burning village. Our positions were burning, their positions were also burning. Silence. You could hear only how the slate exploded, the sea, the pleasant fresh breeze and the smell of gunpowder. There was no moving, we returned to our “Lighthouse” position.

The day passed quietly. Everyone already wanted to return to the base – we were terribly tired. At night we began to prepare to leave. About an hour from the side of our positions there was a terrible shooting – Donbas battalion was going to replace us. Ten minutes later – PK machine gun started to fire near the entrance to the basement, AGS explosions. Ah... Wild people.

We got on the vehicles. Without my countryman body, it was hard to carry everything alone. It's good that we did not have to attack or retreat I obviously would not have taken it all. Again, that feeling of hopelessness when you were sitting in the truck loaded with ammunition, you got ATGM under your side, and RPG was on the floor. KamAZ was full of people waiting until someone got to the dugouts to take some stupid thing he had forgotten there.

The Base. We had a rotation a couple of days later. We were coming home. The regiment was placed in reserves...

ABOUT AUTHOR

Callsign “Woland” was born in Chernihiv city, Ukraine. Since 2008 a member of the Organization “Patriot of Ukraine,” in 2009 became a head of the “Patriot of Ukraine” branch in Chernihiv. During the winter 2013/2014 actively participated on the Maidan in Kiev. In June 2014 joined the 2nd company battalion “AZOV” which later grew to the size of a regiment. The author participated in the liberation of Mariupil’ city and joined Ilovais’k and Shyrokyne operations. Since summer 2015 the author is chief of staff of Chernihiv branch of the Civil Corps “AZOV.”

[1] “The Maidan” - a square (Eng.) Here the Maidan is a name for the events occurred during winter 2013/14 in Kyiv on Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Ukrainian))

[2] Order of the Heavenly Hundred Heroes – protesters killed during the Maidan received this name for their civil courage, patriotism and the defense of the constitutional principles of democracy, human rights, and freedom

[3] Berkut and VV - were special units of government law enforcement who participated in clashes at winter 2013/14

[4] Sashko Bily – controversial nationalist was famous for his participation in Russian-Chechen war on the Caucasus in 90’s on the side of Chechens. He gained popularity of uncompromising actions against corrupted government and local authorities. Murdered on March 25th, 2014 by the special police unit when already new Ukrainian government was in charge.

[5] ATO – Anti Terrorist Operation how Ukrainian president P. Poroshenko decided to name Russian-Ukrainian war.

[6] Party of Regions – was ex-president Yanukovich puppet party. Currently prohibited in Ukraine.

[7] Grandeeswhofought – intentionally merged words of a mem as a result of Russian propaganda overkilled theme of WW2 veterans in an attempt to raise Russian unity.

[8] Khokhly – the name Russians gave to Ukrainians to offend them. That points to a specific haircut Ukrainian Cossacks had when long tail of hair only left on the head.

[9] Petrivka - the popular market in Kyiv to buy books

[10] Churka - The term comes from Russia and describes people from the Caucasus region of ex-Soviet Union (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, etc.) Churkas are usually seen as loud, pushy, insolent, and just generally repulsive.

[11] October 14th – In Ukraine is a Defender Day a state holiday since 2015. The date was chosen because it is a religious holiday Intercession of the Theotokos which was celebrated since the 12th century and especially celebrated by Ukrainian Cossacks. Because of the historical spirit of this day many nationalist organizations using it to for their marches.

[12] Bratstvo – Brotherhood (Eng) here probably a name of civic group.

[13] VK – vk.com popular social network in post-Soviet countries.

[14] Donetsk Hillfort – an archeological mark place close to Kharkiv, Ukraine

[15] Moscow Patriarchate - The Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine

[16] Against Everyone – Action held in 2009 in Kyiv demanded total reset of government.

[17] Afghanians – here people who belong to the organization of veterans who served in Soviet-Afghan war.
[18] Language issue – is a speculation on the status of Russian language in sovereign Ukraine.
[19] St. George's ribbons - is a widely recognized military symbol in Russia.
[20] Berkut – Special law enforcement unit by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
[21] Grushevs'kogo Street – one of the streets in Kyiv where clashes took place during the Maidan.
[22] December 1st, 2013 – was the night when students' rally of EU supporters was attacked by Berkut forces with excessive power. This triggered the reaction from citizens which gathered next day in hundreds of thousands to protest police brutality.
[23] KCSA - the office building of Kyiv City State Administration
[24] Ruslana – is popular Ukrainian singer. She was on EU student's rally on stage warming up crowds.
[25] Yatsenyuk – in 2013 he was one of the Opposition leaders.
[26] Svoboda, C14, Narnia, Right Sector – organizations representing right wing and nationalists.
[27] Udar, Svoboda, and Batkivschyna – political parties with presence in Ukrainian Parliament representing opposition in 2013
[28] Kreshchatyk – Widely known street in Kyiv
[29] Viche - was a mass assembly of citizens in medieval Slavic countries to discuss important issues and adopt resolutions.
[30] Covering heads and faces with things like holydays masks and kitchen pots was a performance to protest against new laws which prohibited wearing any protective elements like helmets on the streets.
[31] Automaidan – civil group which members are known by performing protests and activities mostly using their vehicles
[32] Samooborona – Selfdefence (Eng.) one of the a civic group on Maidan.
[33] Spilna Sprava – (Eng.)Common Cause, a civil organization
[34] Anti-Maidan – collective name for those who actively opposed Maidan movement.
[35] Oplot – (Eng.) bulwark, bastion. Oplot was a civic organization with pro-Russian views mostly residing in Kharkov city. Later when Russia provoked a war Oplot members formed Oplot battalion and joined Russian occupation forces on Donbas.
[36] Mykhalchyshyn – Party Svoboda (Eng. Freedom) was their MPs, in the future a member of the Security Service, and maybe even in the past
[37] May 1st and May 9th are state holidays in Ukraine

[38] Medved' – bear (Russian)

[39] Vatnyks - a scornful name of Russian patriot. The name derived from traditional Russian winter coat stuffed with wadding

[40] 300th – is the military code for wounded. 200th is a code for dead.

[41] ZU-machine - ZU-23, is a Soviet towed 23 mm anti-aircraft twin-barreled autocannon.

[42] Novorussia – is utopic propagandist term created by Kremlin propaganda to drive the idea of creating a new state on territory of Ukraine

[43] Batia – (Eng. Father) is a call sign of separatist.

[44] A chastener – is how often Russian media propaganda called all Ukrainian forces who protected sovereignty of the country.

[45] Vostok – here author refers to the members of Vostok (Eng. East) Battalion which was recruited from Russian Chechnya region.

[46] KPVT – KPV 14.5 heavy machine gun (T) meant to be installed on armored vehicles

[47] Sotnyk - the commander of the company of 100 men in old Ukrainian army.

[48] Sotnya – (Eng. Hundred) Historic name of a military unit of 100 men size analog NATO Company unit.

[49] MRLS "Hail" – designed in USSR MRLS "BM21-Grad" with 40 missiles and max range of 40 km

[50] Aidar – is one of the volunteer battalions fought against Russian invasion in Donbas region

[51] Chotovy – A commander of Chota; a military unit of about 30 men of a size.

[52] ATO – Anti Terrorists Operation as unlawfully Poroshenko decided to call the Russian aggression even in the Ukrainian laws there was clear identification of such hostile actions as an act of war.

[53] UAF – Ukrainian Army Forces

[54] Dnipro battalion – one of the organized battalions of volunteers who was among first responders on Russian aggression on the East of Ukraine

[55] RPG18 called "a fly" in military

[56] SRG – here stands for Sabotage and Reconnaissance Group

[57] DShK - The DShK 1938 is a Soviet heavy machine gun firing the 12.7×108mm cartridge.

[58] SPG-9 - The SPG-9 "Kopye" (Spear) is a tripod-mounted man-portable, 73 millimeter caliber recoilless gun.

[59] Nimesil – a painkiller pills

[60] Whirlwind – MRLS BM-30 "Smerch", NATO code MRL 280mm M1983

[61] The author mentions those people from different countries who received positions in higher government to balance corrupt local well-known persons. These people received a position and a citizenship immediately. Many of them left their positions for various reasons, some for the failure to perform transparently, some for disappointment in new government which used them as a banner to hide their corruption.

[62] PTRD – PTRD-41 an anti-tank rifle produced and used from early 1941 by the Soviet Red Army during World War II.